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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 22 NOVEMBER 2024 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 19 JUMADA I, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 296 | Pages: 8

CM to announce heads to various boards soon: HM

MYSURU, 21 NOV

Home Minister G Parameshwara announced on Thursday that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will soon reveal the list of nominated directors and members for various boards and corporations throughout the state. The state has already appointed heads for several of these bodies. During a meeting with Congress activists at the District Congress office, Parameshwara stated that the nominations were compiled two months ago, incorporating recommendations from local MLAs, ministers, and even former Congress MLAs who lost in the recent assembly elections. He emphasised that dedicated party workers will soon be recognised for their efforts. ***—Salar News***

Setback to COP29 as all nations reject climate finance deal

BAKU, 21 NOV

In a significant setback for COP29 negotiations, a draft climate finance package aimed at supporting developing countries was rejected unanimously by all signatories to the UN climate convention on Thursday. The COP29 presidency, however, assured nations that the draft was not final and requested submissions for bridging proposals, anticipating a revised, more concise version later in the evening. The draft highlighted a persistent issue: developed countries have yet to commit to a specific annual climate finance figure for developing nations starting in 2025. Developing countries insist they require at least USD 1.3 trillion annually thirteen times the USD 100 billion committed in 2009 to address escalating climate challenges. Currently, negotiators from European Union states are considering a target between USD 200 billion and USD 300 billion per year. ***—PTI***

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US indicts Adani for ₹2,200cr bribery

Arrest warrant issued for Adani & nephew; Group calls case 'baseless'

NEW YORK/NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

Billionaire Gautam Adani has been charged by US prosecutors for allegedly being part of a scheme to pay USD 265 million (about Rs 2,200 crore) bribe to Indian officials in exchange for solar power contracts. A Reuters report said arrest warrants were issued for Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani.

The bombshell allegations, which Adani Group termed "baseless", may have a widespread fallout ranging from reputational risk to the conglomerate, inability to raise funds from the US market and the billionaire restricting his overseas travels.

Adani, India's second-richest man, and seven others, including his nephew Sagar, have been charged by the US Department of Justice with paying bribes to unidentified officials of state governments in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha to buy expensive solar power.

Prosecutors said the US started an investigation in 2022. They alleged the group raised USD 2 billion in loans and bonds in 20 years, including from US firms, on the backs of false and misleading statements.

Adani Green Energy in 2021 won a tender to supply 8 gigawatts of solar power to the government-owned Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI). New Delhi-based Azure Power, whose officials too have been named along with former executives of Canadian public pension fund manager CDPQ in the case, won a similar 4 GW tender.

SECI was unsuccessful in finding buyers for the power at the prices contracted with Adani and Azure. Adani, in 2021 and 2022, allegedly met government officials and offered them bribes to sign power sale agreements with SECI. Electricity distribution companies in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh entered into agreements with SECI thereafter.

The indictment alleges that Rs 25 lakh per megawatt was paid to an Andhra Pradesh government official, after which the state agreed to purchase 7,000 MW of solar power from SECI. Odisha too purchased 500 MW.

Adani Group said it will take legal recourse.

Sagar allegedly used his phone to track details of the bribes offered, while Adani Green Energy CEO Vneet Jaain used his phone to take a photograph of a document summarising Azure Power's share of the bribes paid, amounting to over USD 80 million.

In WhatsApp exchanges during the bribery scheme, the accused were referred to by code name - Adani was referred to as 'SAG' or 'super aggregator', 'Numero uno' and 'The Big man' while Jaain was 'V', 'snake' and 'Numero uno minus one'.

US law allows pursuing foreign corruption allegations if they involve American investors or markets.

Adani, Sagar, Jaain are charged with conspiracy and securities fraud; Ranjit Gupta and Agarwal, who are former executives of another publicly traded renewable energy company, with Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations. Agarwal and three former employees of a Canadian institutional investor — Cyril Cabanes, Saurabh Agarwal and Deepak Malhotra - have been accused of obstruction of justice and FCPA violations.

The conglomerate just rebounded from US short-seller Hindenburg Research's damning fraud allegations.

The Kenyan government on Thursday scrapped its airport and energy deal with the Adani Group. Adani was to run the airport for 30 years. A school dropout, Gautam Adani founded the group in 1988 as a commodities trading firm and built an empire of airports, shipping ports, power generation, energy transmission and mining companies. *—PTI*

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Kenyan government on Thursday scrapped its airport and energy deal with the Adani Group ***PHOTO: PTI***

CENTRE LISTS WAQF, 14 OTHER BILLS FOR WINTER SESSION

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

The government has announced a roster of 15 bills for the upcoming winter session of Parliament, commencing on Monday. Among the significant legislative proposals is an amendment to the Waqf law, alongside five new draft bills, one of which aims to establish a cooperative university.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill is set for consideration and potential passage following the submission of a report by a joint committee from both Houses to the Lok Sabha. This panel is expected to deliver its findings on the final day of the first week of the session, which concludes on 20 December. Another notable piece of legislation is the Punjab Courts (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to increase the pecuniary appellate jurisdiction of Delhi district courts from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. Additionally, the Merchant Shipping Bill aims to ensure compliance with India's maritime treaty obligations. *—PTI*

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KEJRI'S TOILET STINKS UP

BJP leaders in Delhi protest against AAP Convener Arvind Kejriwal, on Thursday, alleging extravagant luxurious items including gold-plated toilet seats were used to renovate his bungalow ***PHOTO: PTI*** ***>>>More on Page 3***

CM reinstates ration cards for all amid BPL card controversy

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

Allaying fears that the state government would scrap the entire "below poverty line (BPL)" ration cards, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday instructed the Food Department officials not to cancel any ration cards.

This order follows the controversy surrounding reports that over 22.6 lakh Below the Poverty Line (BPL) cardholders were found to be ineligible.

Siddaramaiah said, "Only government employees and income tax payers are being weeded out from BPL list, not eligible poor beneficiaries".

Meanwhile, Food and Civil Supplies Minister KH Muniyappa on Thursday said that the State has decided not to cancel any BPL card.

Muniyappagave the clarification when the Opposition BJP raised the issue of BPL card cancellation and demanded the resignation of Muniyappa as the state Food and Civil Supplies minister. The government is undertaking a BPL card revision process, reviewing the eligibility of the families to weed out ineligible cards. Muniyappa said only one or two per cent of BPL cards have been converted to Above Poverty Line (APL) cards. "The Chief Minister has instructed us to restore the BPL status of all eligible cards, except those belonging to government employees and income-tax payers," Muniyappa said. In his reaction to the BJP's demand for his resignation over the issue, he said that as the Opposition party, it was their "duty" to ask for resignation. "It is not required," the minister said. *—PTI*

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during a meeting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in New Delhi ***PHOTO: PTI***

CM MEETS FM OVER LOW NABARD FUNDING

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday, urging her to intervene and increase the Short Term Agricultural Loans (SAO) limit for the fiscal 2024-25.

In the meeting held at North block, he highlighted a sharp decline in the proposed loan allocation by NABARD, which has sanctioned only Rs 2,340 crore against the state's applied limit of Rs 9,162 crore, a 58 per cent reduction compared to the previous year's Rs 5,600 crore. Presenting a detailed representation, he emphasised that Karnataka aims to disburse short-term agricultural loans worth Rs 25,000 crore to 35 lakh farmers in 2024-25. *—PTI*

AAP unveils 1st list of 11 names for Delhi polls

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

AAP released its inaugural list of 11 candidates for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, set for February. Notably, the party has chosen to drop three sitting MLAs while fielding six leaders recently transitioned from BJP and Congress. AAP is the first party to announce candidates for the elections, which will decide the fate of 70 members in the Delhi Assembly.

Gopal Rai, AAP's Delhi convener, explained the early announcement of candidates, highlighting that eight of the 11 constituencies are not currently held by AAP, six of which belong to the BJP. Among the MLAs dropped from candidacy are Rituraj Jha (Kirari), Gulab Singh Yadav (Matiala), and Abdul Rahman (Seelampur). New candidates include Brahm Singh Tanwar (Chhatarpur), Anil Jha (Kirari), and BB Tyagi (Laxmi Nagar), all of whom recently joined AAP from the BJP. Former Congress member Choudhary Zubair Ahmed has been nominated for Seelampur.

Rai stated that the release of these names marks the beginning of AAP's electoral campaign, promising further initiatives in the days to come. AAP has been governing Delhi since 2015. *—PTI*

SP ACTIVIST AMONG 100 BOOKED FOR UP BYPOLLS CLASH

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 21 NOV

More than 100 individuals, including supporters of the Samajwadi Party and the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM), have been charged with violence and stone-pelting in Kakroli village during the recent Meerapur assembly by-election in Uttar Pradesh, police reported on Thursday.

An FIR lodged on Wednesday evening names 15 supporters from the Samajwadi Party and 10 from AIMIM, with accusations including attempted murder, obstructing police duties, and engaging in violent clashes with law enforcement on 20 November , according to Superintendent of Police (SP) Rural Aditya Bansal. Investigations are ongoing to identify additional suspects involved in the incident.

The reported violence escalated when police attempted to disperse a group of individuals confronting them amid the voting process. AIMIM district president Maulana Imran Qasmi disputed the police's account, alleging that officers hindered eligible voters from casting their ballots. Qasmi claimed the accusations of stone-pelting were fabricated, asserting that the protest was in response to the police's actions.

The voting took place on Wednesday for by-elections across nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh. *—PTI*

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PM conferred with Guyana's highest national award

GEORGETOWN, 21 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with Guyana's highest civilian honour 'The Order of Excellence' during his visit to the nation on the final leg of his three-nation tour.

Addressing a Special Session of Parliament of Guyana, Modi on said that space and sea should be subjects of "universal cooperation", not universal conflict. Modi also said India has "never moved forward with selfishness, expansionist attitude", and it has always been away from harbouring any feeling of seizing resources.

Modi, who arrived in Guyana on the final leg of his three-nation visit, is the first Indian head of the state to visit the country in more than 50 years.

In his address, Modi also asserted that it is "time for awakening of the Global South", and for its members to come together to create a new global order. Modi termed the India-Guyana ties of 'mitti' (soil) as full of cordiality. *—PTI*

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GUNMEN OPEN FIRE

50 killed in Pak militant attack

PESHAWAR, 21 NOV

At least 50 individuals have lost their lives and 20 others sustained injuries in a militant ambush targeting several vehicles in northwest Pakistan, officials reported on Thursday. The attack occurred in the Kurram district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which borders Afghanistan.

The convoy, comprising over 200 vehicles, was en route from Parachinar to Peshawar, the provincial capital, when gunmen opened fire. Rescue authorities confirmed that the casualties include eight women and five children, with most victims identified as members of the Shia community.

The assault took place in areas largely controlled by the Taliban, according to local journalists. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur condemned the attack, directing a delegation, including the provincial law minister and local lawmakers, to visit Kurram immediately to assess the situation. He further called for the establishment of a Provincial Highways Police unit to enhance security along the region's roads. Gandapur expressed his condolences to the bereaved families and announced financial support for those affected. *—PTI*

Locals wait for victims in Pakistan's Kurram on Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

ICC issues arrest warrant against Netanyahu for 'war crimes' in Gaza

HAGUE, 21 NOV

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and a senior Hamas leader, Mohammed Deif, accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity amid the ongoing Gaza conflict.

This development, occurring on Thursday, marks Netanyahu and others as internationally wanted suspects and could complicate cease-fire negotiations in the 13-month conflict.

However, the practical effects of the warrants may be limited, as both Israel and the United States are not members of the ICC, and several Hamas figures implicated have already been killed in the ongoing violence. Israel's leaders have condemned the ICC's actions, labelling them as disgraceful and antisemitic. US President Joe Biden also expressed strong support for Israel's right to defend itself.

The ICC's three-judge panel found reasonable grounds to believe that Netanyahu and Gallant intentionally deprived Gaza's civilian population of essential resources like food, water, and medical supplies.

Khan's allegations against Hamas leaders include murder, torture, and taking hostages during the 7 October, 2023 attacks, which resulted in significant civilian casualties. Human rights organisations welcomed the ICC's action, claiming it underscores that no individuals are above the law.

Meanwhile, Israeli opposition leaders condemned the ICC's decision, calling it morally blind and a reward for terrorism. Despite the issuance of warrants, it remains uncertain when any suspects might face trial at The Hague. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: ANI

BJP leader Manohar Tahsildar dies at 80

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

BJP leader Manohar Tahsildar died on Wednesday night at a private hospital in the city following prolonged illness, party sources said. The 80-year-old is survived by four sons and two daughters, they said. His mortal remains will be taken to Hangal in Haveri district, the constituency he had represented, for his followers to pay their last respects. The body will later be taken to his native village for the last rites, the sources said. Tahsildar had represented Hangal Assembly segment four times and was a minister during the first Siddaramaiah-led Congress government (2013–18). He quit Congress and joined JD(S) in 2023. He joined the BJP earlier this year, during the Lok Sabha polls. He has also served as the deputy speaker when SM Krishna was the Chief Minister. CM Siddaramaiah & ex-CM Basavaraj Bommai expressed grief. —*PTI*

Work with IISCs, IITs, Kumaraswamy tells steel makers

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

Union Steel Minister HD Kumaraswamy has said that steelmakers need to collaborate with leading institutions such as Indian Institutes of Science (IISCs) and IITs for research to create a globally-competitive and technologically-advanced steel industry. The minister said India's steel sector stands as the backbone of the country's industrial strength and a cornerstone of nation-building. "From skyscrapers to highways and railways to defence, steel powers our progress and fuels our ambitions," he said. Speaking during National Metallurgists Awards ceremony here, he said, "To create a globally competitive and technologically advanced steel industry, our steelmakers need to collaborate with leading institutions like IISCs and IITs for research." Kumaraswamy said specialty steel is also a crucial sector where research and innovation is the need of the hour.—*PTI*

ISRO, ASA join hands for Gaganyaan

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

LThe Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Thursday said it has signed an Implementation Agreement (IA) with Australian Space Agency (ASA) for further strengthening of cooperation in space activities between the two countries. The IA will facilitate cooperation between the two space agencies on crew and crew module recovery for Gaganyaan missions, the country's first crewed spaceflight programme, it said. The IA was signed at Canberra on 20 November. The ISRO has embarked on its Human Spaceflight (Gaganyaan) programme to carryout low earth orbit in an Indian crew module with up to three crew members onboard for up to three days and to safely recover the module. —*PTI*

MM Hills temple collects Rs 2.43 cr Hundi in 27 days

MYSURU, 21 NOV

MThe Malemahadeshwara temple at MM Hills in Hunsur taluk of Chamarajnagr district received Rs 2.43 crore in Hundi offering in the past 27 days. The collection included offerings made in currencies of Japan, Saudi Arabia, Nepal and Qatar, in addition to 62 grams of gold ornaments and 2.52kg of silver ornaments. The counting of the money held at the Commercial Complex building till lasted till Wednesday night at 8.30 pm. It was done in presence of Salur Mutt seer Shantha Mallikarjuna Swamy, MM Hills development Authority executive secretary AM Raghu and deputy secretary Chandrashekhar. —*Salar News*

Scrap changes to Waqf Act: AIMPLB

'Amendment is attack on autonomy'

BENGALURU 21 NOV

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) on Thursday expressed strong Opposition to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha, calling it a direct attack on the autonomy and integrity of Muslim Waqf properties.

Even as the Union government justified the bill as a measure to improve transparency and curb encroachment, the AIMPLB raised concerns that the amendments would lead to encroachment of mosques, cemeteries and other religious sites.

Speaking at a conference organised at the Press Club on Thursday, AIMPLB General Secretary Maulana Mohammed Fazlurrahim Mujaddidi said, "By handing key decisions to government-appointed collectors, the bill effectively ensures bias in disputes involving Waqf lands."

AIMPLB General Secretary Maulana Mohammed Fazlurrahim Mujaddidi & others in Bengaluru on Thursday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Demanding withdrawal of the bill, the board vowed to use all democratic means to oppose its implementation.

The controversy over Waqf Board erupted after BJP accused Karnataka Waqf Board of conspiring to take 1,500 acres in villages.

The board on Thursday also announced that its 29th session would be organised at Darul Uloom Sabeel-ur-Rashad in the City on 23 and 24 November.

A public meeting will also be held at Eidgah Quddus Sahab.

—*Salar News*

BJP protests over Waqf properties

Farmers, seers join campaign in State

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

Upping the ante following allegations by a section of farmers and many others in different parts of the State that their lands have been marked as Waqf properties, the BJP on Thursday held protests in several districts, targeting the ruling Congress government.

The demonstrations, held under the slogan Namma Bhoomi Namma Hakku (Our land, Our Right), were organised to oppose the alleged "encroachments" by the Waqf Board in the state, BJP sources said.

A number of BJP workers, joined by a section of seers and farmers, took to the streets in Kalaburagi, Ballari, Haveri, Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru and Udupi.

"We have two demands. We want the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the withdrawal of a 1974 gazette notification related to wakf properties. The recent withdrawal of notices to farmers by the state government was done because of the elections in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Jharkhand," a BJP worker said.

BJP leader CT Ravi and others protest against State government, in Chikkamagaluru on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

Earlier this month, Joint Parliament Committee (JPC) on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill Chairman Jagdambika Pal visited Hubballi, Vijayapura and Belagavi.

Meanwhile, Mysuru city unit of BJP will organise a protest in front of the deputy commissioner's office, protesting against the administration allegedly converting properties as Waqf assets.

—*Salar News*

Guarantee panel to conduct adalats for beneficiaries

MYSURU, 21 NOV

Pushpa Amarnath, Vice Chairperson of the Karnataka State Guarantee Implementation Authority, announced on Thursday that the panel will soon conduct taluk-wise guarantee adalats to address the grievances of beneficiaries.

Amarnath clarified that only 4,221 BPL cards had been converted into APL cards in Mysuru. She condemned BJP leaders for misleading the public regarding the issue of removing ineligible BPL cards.

Cong condemns BJP for misleading public on BPL

Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) Spokesperson M Lakshman on Thursday condemned BJP leaders for misleading the public regarding the cancellation of ineligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards. He clarified that the State had only cancelled BPL cards for ineligible beneficiaries, such as income taxpayers, converting them into Above Poverty Line (APL) cards. Addressing a presser in Mysuru, Lakshman explained that the Centre had issued guidelines to the State to cancel 12 lakh BPL cards. —*Salar News*

OFFICIALS UNDER LENS

Cash & jewellery seized in Lokayukta raids in 3 districts

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

A huge cache of cash, jewellery, watches and other valuable items have been recovered during raids conducted by Karnataka Lokayukta across three districts on Thursday.

The raids were conducted in Kolar, Bengaluru Urban and Mandya districts in connection with four cases registered with the agency against officials of various departments. Around 25 places belonging to accused officers were raided and records checked, said sources. In Chikkaballapur, raids were conducted at the premises of Krishnaveni MC, a senior geologist in the Department of Mines and Geology. In Mandya, the raid was conducted at the premises of Mahesh, the MD of Kaveri Neeravai Nigama in Surface Water Data Centre, Bengaluru.

Other officials, whose premises were raided, include director of Town and Country Planning NK Thippe Swamy and excise superintendent (Bengaluru City) Mohan K.

In July, Karnataka Lokayukta, raided at 54 premises belonging to 12 government officials in six districts. These included the residences of six officials in Bangalore city, two officials in Bangalore

Jewellery and other items seized by Lokayukta on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

Rural district, two officials in Shimoga district and one officer each in Yadagiri and Tumkur.

The officials whose premises were raided in July include additional director of Industries and Commerce Department CT Muddu Kumar, project director of Yojana Nirdarshakaru Balawanth, senior veterinary officer R Siddappa, municipal commissioner of Hebbagodi CMC K Narasimha Murthy and joint commissioner of Commercial Tax Ramesh Kumar. A bill collector working with Hootagalli City Municipal Council was arrested by Lokayukta officials on Thursday for accepting a bribe of Rs 40,000. Dinesh demanded a total of Rs 2 lakh from a complainant in exchange for issuing town planning approval and transferring khata. —*Salar News*

Min doesn't know Kannada: Boy faces action

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

A boy's alleged remark that the Education Minister "doesn't know Kannada", irked Madhu Bangarappa, who holds the portfolio, as he directed officials to take action against the student.

The incident took place during the launch of a programme to provide free online coaching to 25,000 students from Karnataka taking CET, JEE, and NEET exams.

During the virtual interaction on Wednesday, the student reportedly said that "the education minister doesn't know Kannada".

The School Education and Literacy Minister initially appeared cool on hearing the boy's remark, but later made no secret of his annoyance.

The Minister then instructed principal secretary (school education) Ritesh Kumar and PU (Pre-University) department director Sindhu Roopesh, who were seated next to him, to take action on the matter.

At this point, one officer expressed doubt whether the student had indeed made such a comment, to which the Minister responded: "ya, ya...he said that....you have to take action, I cannot sit quietly. See who it was...."

The officials assured that action will be taken.

Targeting Bangarappa on the issue, the BJP called him "Avidya Mantri"

—*PTI*

'MINIMUM HIKE'

Health Minister justifies revision of user fees in govt hospitals

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao on Thursday defended the hike in the user fees at hospitals affiliated by the Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI), saying that the increase was "minimum" and would not burden people.

The user fees for treatment, surgeries, blood tests, scans and other medical services at the state-run Victoria, Minto, Vani Vilas, Super Speciality and Trauma and Emergency Care hospitals have been revised with effect from 1 November.

"The user fees were last revised several years ago. We have now revised what was Rs 10 to Rs 20 and what was Rs 20 to Rs 40 or Rs 50," Rao said.

"These days, every action of the government is being linked to the guarantee schemes. It is being said that the government has no money because of these schemes. Weren't there revisions in the water and electricity bills earlier? Haven't such increases happened during (tenure of) earlier governments?" he asked.

While the rate of a single bed in special wards has been increased from Rs 750 to Rs 2,000 per day, the same for twin-occupancy has been revised from Rs 750 to Rs 1,000. The patients in these special wards need to pay additional hospital procedure charges, sources said.

The fee for the beds in general wards has been increased from Rs 15 per day to Rs 50.

The in-patient registration fee has been increased from Rs 25 to Rs 50, while in-patient bed charges per day is up from Rs 30 to Rs 50. The OPD registration fee was increased from Rs 10 to Rs 20. —*Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

POLICE TO APPEAL SC TO CANCEL BAIL TO DARSHAN: HM

MYSURU, 21 NOV

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday said his department would file an appeal in the Supreme Court, seeking cancellation of the bail granted to Sandalwood actor Darshan Thoogudeepa in Renukaswamy murder case.

The actor was released from prison for six weeks on a conditional bail granted by the High Court of Karnataka on medical grounds.

The minister told reporters that police were in the process of filing an appeal in the top court against the bail granted to the actor. The police were conducting the investigation into the murder case against the actor. A chargesheet would be filed in the court after completing the investigation, he said —*Salar News*

CRIME BEAT

Police warn citizens of fake e-challan scam

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) issued a cautionary advisory on Thursday, warning citizens about a new e-challan scam targeting vehicle owners. In this scam, cybercriminals impersonate traffic police officers and attempt to deceive motorists into making online payments for non-existent traffic violations.

The advisory emphasised that citizens should only trust and use the official BTP website, https://btp.gov.in, to make payments. Speaking to Salar News, Joint Commissioner of Police, Traffic, MN Anucheth, said, "We have been receiving numerous complaints about fake calls and messages that claim to be from our department."

How does the scam work

Scammers, posing as representatives of Parivahan Seva or Karnataka Police, contact motorists via calls and messages, informing them of unpaid traffic violation fines. They then share a QR code and instruct victims to pay.

BTP does not use WhatsApp

Anucheth said Bengaluru Traffic Police send notices via post only, not through WhatsApp or other messaging platforms.

"Anyone receiving such calls or messages can file complaints through our official website or helpline numbers: 080-22868550 / 22868444," Anucheth said. —*Salar News*

Corporates to adopt 100 engg colleges

BENGALURU, 21 NOV

Information Technology Minister Priyank Kharge on Thursday said 100 engineering colleges are set to be "adopted" by an equal number of corporates by next year, as the government makes efforts to rope in industries to boost the employment prospects of students.

Citing an example, he quoted a big automobile company as saying that it is ready to provide jobs but students are not employable as they lack training.

Priyank Kharge *PHOTO: PTI*

"The launch of Nipuna Karnataka saw collaborations with IBM, Intel, Microsoft, NVIDIA, BFSI Consortium and Accenture to drive skilling and workforce transformation. Through these MoUs, Karnataka will train 1 lakh trainees in a span of one year," Kharge said.

Kharge said at the three-day Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS), which concluded on Thursday, a Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) was signed between Department of Electronics, IT, BT and S&T, Government of Karnataka and DRDO on co-operation and promotion of defence industrial ecosystem of Karnataka.

MoUs were also signed with Finland and Switzerland.

—*PTI*

BEYOND BORDERS

Nandini enters Delhi-NCR market

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday launched the Karnataka Milk Federation's (KMF) Nandini brand milk products in the Delhi-NCR market, pricing them marginally lower than local competitors to grab a foothold in the region.

The cooperative will retail four cow milk variants, curd and buttermilk from Friday, with competitive pricing that undercuts established players like Mother Dairy and Amul.

Cow milk will be sold at Rs 56 per litre, full-cream milk at Rs 67 per litre, standardised milk at Rs 61 per litre, toned milk at Rs 55 per litre and curd at Rs 74 per kg.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launches KMF Nandini brand milk products in Delhi-NCR market on Thursday *PHOTO: SALAR*

"We have surplus milk in the state. The KMF along with Mandya Milk Union will market surplus milk of about 4 lakh litres per day in Delhi-NCR," Siddaramaiah said after launching the products.

The federation currently collects 100 lakh litres of milk daily. With local consumption being 60 lakh litres, it leaves a surplus of 40 lakh litres for expansion into new markets.

The Chief Minister, however, acknowledged the challenges of transporting milk over 2,500 km, which takes 50–54 hours. There is a need to find new markets for surplus milk and gradually, the KMF should be able to sell 5–6 lakh litres per day in Delhi-NCR, he said.

KMF Chairman LBP Bheemanaik said milk quality would be maintained during transit. The federation has already partnered with 40 dealers in the Delhi-NCR region to facilitate sales, he added.

The KMF has a robust infrastructure of 26.76 lakh milk producers and 15,737 dairy cooperative societies. —*PTI*

BMTC bus driver assaulted by biker

A Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus driver was assaulted and verbally abused by a two-wheeler rider on Nrupathunga Road after allegedly being denied the right of way.According to a complaint filed by the BMTC staff, the incident occurred on Wednesday night while the bus, operating from the Kothanur Dinne depot, was traveling from Majestic to CK Palya. CCTV footage from inside the bus captured the accused, identified as Mohammed Fazal, verbally abusing the driver, Kushal Kumar, before physically assaulting him by grabbing his collar. The rider also obstructed the bus from moving forward. —*Salar News*

Flight attendant dies in accident

A flight attendant died in a road accident on Rajarajeshwari Nagar Main Road on Thursday. The deceased, 26-year-old Prakyath, was a flight steward based in Hong Kong. He had recently returned to Bengaluru to visit his parents, who reside in MG Layout. Prakyath was scheduled to board a flight back to Hong Kong at 6 a.m. on Thursday. According to Kengeri traffic police, Prakyath had met with friends and had gone for coffee near RR Nagar Gate before the incident occurred. The accident took place around 1am while he was returning home. —*Salar News*

Man found dead near vacant plot

The Bengaluru Rural police on Thursday discovered the half-naked body of a man dumped near a vacant plot at Ballur in Anekal taluk.Police said the body was found by two rag-pickers early in the morning. The deceased has been identified as Alagaraj, 31, a native of Madurai. His two-wheeler and a tin containing ghee was found at the spot. Preliminary investigations suggested that the man was murdered. A deep injury mark was found on the victim's head. Experts from the Forensic Science Laboratory and a dog squad investigated the crime scene.A case has been registered at Attibele police station. —*Salar News*

NIA raids in Jammu region linked to infiltration probe

JAMMU, 21 NOV

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) launched extensive raids across various locations in the Jammu region on Thursday, targeting areas including Reasi, Udhampur, Ramban, Doda, and Kishtwar. This operation is part of an ongoing investigation into cases concerning the infiltration of Pakistani terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir. Official sources indicated that operations were underway at nine locations within the division. The NIA is receiving support from the local police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) during these raids. The agency's primary focus is on dismantling networks linked to terrorist infiltration, which may involve overground workers, surrendered militants, and suspected guides and harbourers. The operation underscores the ongoing efforts to enhance security and combat terrorism in the region. *—PTI*

UP bypolls: SP alleges rigging, administrative bias

LUCKNOW, 21 NOV

The Samajwadi Party on Thursday alleged that rigging and administrative bias were the order of the day during voting in the byelections to nine assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh, claims dismissed by the BJP which accused the opposition of pursuing politics of "arrogance and negativity". SP President Akhilesh Yadav took to X to claim that despite BJP's efforts, the alliance has secured a moral victory. He said, "This election was a battle of 90 per cent of the state's population against the BJP, who denied the unity, dignity, and rights of the PDA." He added that the people's spirit remained steadfast, despite the BJP's "negative" tactics and the "autocratic" government. In response to the opposition's claims, Uttar Pradesh's Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya dismissed the SP's accusations. *—PTI*

BJP quizzes Adani row timing, blames Soros

BJP says bribes occurred under then Cong ruled states

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

BJP on Thursday targeted Congress over its attack on the Central government after US prosecutors charged industrialist Gautam Adani with bribery and fraud, saying all the states mentioned in the indictment were at that time ruled by opposition parties.

BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya also questioned the timing of the development, as it came just before the start of Parliament session and Donald Trump's impending presidency.

Parliament's Winter session is set to begin on Monday.

Malviya said this raises several questions. "That the Congress is willing to be a prop in the hands of George Soros and his cabal speaks volumes," he said on X in reply to Congress leader Jairam Ramesh's claim that the indictment vindicates the Congress's demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) investigation into the various "Modani scams".

BJP IT department head Amit Malviya asked Congress to answer on the bribes Congress and its allies accepted *PHOTO: PTI*

He told Ramesh, "All the states mentioned here were Opposition-ruled during that time. So, before you pontificate, answer on the bribes the Congress and its allies accepted," he said.

While Odisha and Andhra Pradesh were then ruled by the BJD and the YSR Congress, two regional parties unaffiliated to either the ruling or the opposition alliance at that time, the Congress ally DMK was and remains in power in Tamil Nadu. The Congress was in power in Chhattisgarh.

An Indian court, the BJP leader said, can similarly on legitimate grounds accuse American firms of bribing US government officials to deny access to Indian markets.

Adani has dismissed such suggestions. BJP, too, has denied the allegations. *—PTI*

Oppn seeks 'shameful' Gautam Adani's arrest

Questions what is stopping Centre from acting

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

The leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi demanded the arrest of Adani. Other opposition parties, including TMC, also attacked Adani over the allegations.

Addressing a press conference, the Congress leader said it is now pretty clear and established in the US that the businessman has broken Indian as well as American laws. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said a comprehensive Joint Parliament Committee probe into all aspects of the Adani group's functioning, including its investments in foreign countries, and institutional erosion in India is the need of the hour.

In a statement issued here, the CPI(M) said the Modi government "cannot hide behind a smokescreen anymore", and demanded a CBI probe into the charges.

"It is shameful that such large-scale bribery and suborning of government officials by the Adanis had to be exposed not in India but in the United States through their criminal justice system," the CPI(M) said. TMC MP Sagarika Ghose also said a free and fair probe was required. "The allegation by the United States against the Adani Group and Gautam Adani is extremely serious. Gautam Adani is an industrialist who is known to have very close ties with none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Ghose said.

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha addresses a press conference at the AICC headquarters, in New Delhi, on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

BRS leader K Kavitha wondered what is stopping the Centre from acting against the Adani Group over alleged bribes for solar power contracts, while "political opponents face arrests without evidence."

Adani Group denied the charges, saying the allegations by US prosecutors are "baseless" and the conglomerate is "compliant with all laws." *—PTI*

40 booked for poll booth, EVMs chaos in Maharashtra

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 21 NOV

Police have registered a case against around 40 people after they allegedly vandalised three polling booths at Ghatnandur in Maharashtra's Beed district and damaged some EVMs when voting for the assembly polls was underway a day ago, officials said.

Some police personnel were injured in the attack by the accused, who carried wooden sticks and sharp-edged weapons with them, they said.

Meanwhile, police have registered a case against the candidate of a regional party on charges of attempt to murder after the alleged attack on a businessman in Navi Mumbai during polling for the Maharashtra assembly elections, an official said on Thursday. The candidate and 35 of his supporters went to the office of the victim in Koparkhairne area of Navi Mumbai and allegedly beat him up and another person present there on Wednesday afternoon, the official said.

We and our allies, including smaller parties like the PWP, Samajwadi Party, the Left parties are crossing the majority mark. We are winning 160-165 seats. There will be a stable government in the state

-Sanjay Raut, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP

Cong workers attack car transporting EVM

Congress workers ransacked a car transporting an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) to a strong room in Nagpur after polling concluded for the Maharashtra assembly elections, police said.

The police clarified that the EVM in question, which escaped damage in the attack, was not used in polling and it was kept on standby. *—PTI*

'SHEESHMAHAL' ROW

'Golden' toilet at Kejri's home gives BJP fresh ammo

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

BJP leaders and activists staged a protest in Delhi on Thursday, targeting AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal over claims of excessive luxury items being used in the renovation of his official residence, previously located at 6, Flagstaff Road. The BJP accused Kejriwal of extravagance while he served as Delhi's Chief Minister. However, the police confirming that several BJP leaders were detained during the demonstration.

Among those reportedly held was Virendra Sachdeva, President of the BJP's Delhi unit, alongside Leader of the Opposition Vijendra Gupta and various BJP MPs, who assembled near Kejriwal's current residence on Firoz Shah Road. Notably, former Delhi minister Kailash Gahlot, who recently defected from the AAP to join the BJP, also participated in the protest.

BJP leaders referred to the former bungalow as "Sheeshmahal" and alleged that the lavish furnishings present were not supplied by the Public Works Department (PWD), which manages the property. Following his resignation as Chief Minister, Kejriwal vacated the premises in October this year.

The BJP has raised concerns regarding irregularities in the bungalow's renovation, claiming that exorbitantly pricey household goods were selected, escalating their ongoing accusations against Kejriwal's administration and its handling of public resources. The protest reflects rising tensions between the rival political factions in Delhi. *—PTI.*

BJP workers hold placards during a protest against former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

Waqf panel head says draft report is ready amid row

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

The Chairman of the Joint Committee of Parliament scrutinising the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, Jagdambika Pal, said on Thursday that the panel's draft report is ready amid opposition members' demand for an extension of its 29 November deadline for more deliberations.

"Our draft report is ready. We will soon give a date for clause by clause discussion on its recommendations," Pal told reporters after an almost six-hour meeting of the committee during which the Minority Affairs ministry presented a detailed justification for the amendments proposed by the government in the Waqf Act. Opposition members will meet Speaker Om Birla on 25 November, first day of Parliament's winter session, to push for their demand. They said they need more time to raise questions and seek clarifications. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Pandits' shops demolished in Jammu; sparks row

JAMMU, 21 NOV

The Jammu Development Authority (JDA) has come under fire for demolishing a dozen shops owned by displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu city without prior notice, igniting protests from various quarters. The demolition targeted shops established near the Muthi camp over the past three decades, which were situated on land belonging to the JDA.

Relief Commissioner Arvind Karwani visited the affected area to address the situation, assuring the displaced families that new shops would be constructed. "These shops were on JDA land. The relief organisation has initiated tenders for a shopping complex in Muthi Camp Phase II, with ten new shops to be built and allocated to these shopkeepers shortly," he stated.

Political parties including the BJP, PDP, and Apni Party as well as several Kashmiri Pandit organisations, have condemned the JDA's actions, urging authorities to provide new opportunities for the displaced community.

Shop owner Kuldeep Kisroo lamented, "Instead of supporting us, the government has taken away our livelihoods." Another affected shopkeeper described the demolition as "sheer hooliganism" due to the lack of notice. Anil Bhan, president of the Muthi migrant camp, criticised the timing, asserting that the JDA's actions could have been postponed. Calls for intervention and justice have been echoed by various political leaders and community representatives.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti and urged Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to address the issue with compassion and urgency. *—PTI*

Over 10,000 kg silver seized from truck in Maharashtra

Mumbai, 21 Nov

Police seized 10,080 kg of silver from a truck in Maharashtra's Dhule district on the day of polling for the state assembly elections, an official said. Polling for 288 Assembly constituencies in Maharashtra was held between 7am and 6pm on Wednesday. The seizure was made from the truck headed towards Nagpur under Thalner police station limits at around 6am on Wednesday. *—PTI*

Might back BJP if Biren sacked, says NPP

IMPHAL, 21 NOV

The National People's Party (NPP), which recently withdrew support from Manipur's BJP-led government alleging that the administration failed to resolve the crisis and restore normalcy, on Thursday said the party may reconsider the decision if the saffron party replaces Chief Minister N Biren Singh.

The withdrawal of support on Sunday, however, did not have any impact on the BJP-led government, as the saffron party enjoys absolute majority with its 32 MLAs in the 60-member House. The Naga People's Front and the JD(U) are also in the ruling coalition. Meanwhile, Singh said that the Centre has sanctioned Rs 104.66 crore for providing health care facilities in the hill districts of the state.

Taking to X, Singh said, "For the first time, hill districts like Chandel, Ukhrul, Jiribam, Senapati, and Tamenglong will have access to advanced medical facilities like CT Scans, MRI, ICU services, and super-specialty care—bringing healthcare closer to home." This recent sanction of Rs 104.66 crore under the Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE) is a step towards equitable healthcare for all.

Ten Kuki MLAs including seven from the ruling BJP-led alliance, have urged the extension of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act across the entire state to aid in the recovery of over 6,000 sophisticated weapons allegedly looted by the Meitei community amidst ongoing violence. *—PTI*

MLA's home robbed of ₹1.5cr

The mother of JD(U) MLA KH Joykishan Singh in Manipur has alleged that Rs 18 lakh in cash and jewellery items worth Rs 1.5 crore were looted by a mob that vandalised the legislator's residence on 16 November police said on Thursday. *—PTI*

STRENGTHENING COOPERATION

Modi meets Caribbean leaders, focuses on bilateral ties

GEORGETOWN, 21 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Caribbean leaders on the sidelines of the second India-CARICOM Summit in Guyana, focusing on enhancing bilateral relations and cooperation to empower the Global South. This marks the first visit by an Indian head of state to Guyana in over 50 years.

During the summit, Modi held discussions with Presidents Chan Santokhi of Suriname and Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali of Guyana, along with leaders from Saint Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, Grenada, The Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad & Tobago. His engagement with President Ali was described as "excellent," discussing developmental cooperation in sectors such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Keith Rowley in Georgetown, Guyana, on Thursday *PHOTO:*

Modi proposed a framework of seven pillars such as Capacity Building, Agriculture and Food Security, Renewable Energy and Climate Change, Innovation, Technology and Trade, Cricket and Culture, Ocean Economy, and Medicine and Healthcare aimed at fortifying ties with the Caribbean Community. The summit serves as a pivotal moment for India to strengthen its ties. *—PTI*

Buddhist doctrines key to global harmony: Rajnath in Laos

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has urged the adoption of Buddhist principles to address mounting global conflicts and challenges to the international order.

Speaking at the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Vientiane, Laos, Singh highlighted India's commitment to dialogue as a means of resolving complex international issues, amidst an audience that included counterparts from various nations, including China.

Singh stated, "With the world increasingly polarised into blocks and camps, it is time that the Buddhist doctrines of peaceful co-existence are embraced more closely by all." He emphasised India's historical practice of open communication, which fosters trust and cooperation, crucial for achieving sustainable partnerships in the face of contemporary challenges. Singh also addressed the contentious Code of Conduct discussions concerning the South China Sea.

He advocated for a framework that respects the legitimate rights of all nations and aligns with international law, especially the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982. *—PTI*

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun and others in Vientiane, Laos, on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

Illegal shooting at sea: Two Kerala fishing boats fined

KOCHI, 21 NOV

Two fishing boat owners in Kochi have each been fined Rs 2.5 lakh by the Fisheries Department for permitting a film crew to conduct an at-sea shoot without the necessary approvals. Following an inspection during the Indian Navy's 'Sea Vigil' coastal security exercise, authorities discovered that the vessels, 'Bharat Ratna' and 'Bharat Sagar', were operating without valid licenses, with one also reportedly unfit for service. Additionally, the 33-member film crew was found without safety equipment. The boats were seized and taken to the Vypin Fisheries Marine Enforcement berth. The Fisheries Department clarified that special permission is required to use fishing vessels for non-fishing activities.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Malayalam actor Meghanadhan dead at 60

KOZHIKODE, 21 NOV

Noted Malayalam film and television actor Meghanadhan who is renowned for his memorable villainous roles, has passed away at the age of 60 in the wee hours of Thursday, around 2 am, while receiving treatment for respiratory-related ailments at a local hospital. The son of renowned actor Balan K Nair, Meghanadhan had an illustrious career spanning over 50 films, with notable performances in classics such as "Chamayam", "Chenkol", and "Ee Puzhayum Kadannu". He began his acting journey in 1983 with "Astram", directed by P N Menon, and quickly rose to prominence for his compelling portrayals of antagonists in Malayalam cinema. Meghanadhan's contribution to the industry will be fondly remembered. —*PTI*

K Sanjay Murthy sworn in as India's new CAG

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

K Sanjay Murthy has been officially sworn in as the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, following a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan led by President Droupadi Murmu. A 1989 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Himachal Pradesh cadre, Murthy replaces Girish Chandra Murmu, whose term ended recently. His appointment was confirmed by the Central Government earlier this week. At 10 am, in the Ganatantra Mandap, Murthy took the oath of office in the presence of prominent officials, including Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. The President's office confirmed the event through an official statement. Murthy's tenure as CAG will involve overseeing the nation's financial audits and fiscal management. —*PTI*

HC grants bail to lesbian couple in kidnap case

MUMBAI, 21 NOV

The Bombay High Court has granted bail to a lesbian couple accused of kidnapping a five-year-old girl, acknowledging their desire to have a child. Justice Manish Pitale stated that the couple, members of the LGBTQ+ community, has endured eight months of incarceration. While a prima facie kidnapping case exists, the court noted it was a bailable offence and found no evidence of exploitation against the child. The couple had allegedly paid Rs 9,000 to facilitate the arrangement. The girl's parents reported her missing in March 2024, and she was located in the couple's home shortly after. The couple, in a ten-year live-in relationship, claimed they had treated the child well. —*PTI*

Even Kasab was given a fair trial: SC on Yasin case

SC plans for courtroom in Tihar jail for Yasin's trial

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

The Supreme Court of India has indicated plans to establish a courtroom within Tihar Jail for the trial of Yasin Malik, the Jammu and Kashmir separatist leader, involved in a kidnapping case. A bench led by Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih made the announcement during a hearing regarding a plea from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against a Jammu trial court's direction to physically produce Malik for cross-examination.

Malik, currently serving a life sentence in Tihar Jail, is accused of kidnapping Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of former politician Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. The CBI expressed concerns over Malik's security and the feasibility of transporting him to Jammu for the proceedings.

Yaseen Malik, currently serving a life sentence in Tihar Jail, is accused of kidnapping Rubaiya Sayeed PHOTO: X

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta highlighted that Malik had been "playing tricks" by requesting personal appearance without legal representation and referenced a photograph showing Malik with terrorist Hafiz Saeed.

The Supreme Court noted the necessity of ensuring a fair trial, citing the example of Ajmal Kasab, who received legal assistance during his trial in the 2008 Mumbai attacks. The bench raised questions about the practicalities of conducting cross-examinations online, given the poor connectivity in Jammu, and suggested that the trial could occur within the prison environment.

Malik's previous appearance at the Supreme Court raised serious security concerns, as he was brought without proper procedures. The apex court will hear all accused persons before making any final decisions and has scheduled the next hearing for 28 November. In the meantime, the CBI has been instructed to amend its petition to include all respondents in the case.

Yasin Malik, the head of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, was convicted in a separate terror-funding case earlier this year and remains a figure of significant concern for national security authorities. —*PTI.*

THREAT TO SALMAN

Bishnoi's brother Anmol held, lodged in Iowa jail

WASHINGTON, 21 NOV

Anmol Bishnoi PHOTO: X

Anmol Bishnoi, the younger brother of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, has been arrested by US law enforcement and is currently incarcerated at Pottawattamie County Jail in Iowa. He is wanted in connection with several serious criminal cases, including the recent murder of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Baba Siddique, as well as the shooting outside Bollywood actor Salman Khan's Mumbai home in April.

Reports indicate that Anmol, who was believed to have been living in Canada while frequently travelling to the United States, is linked to a criminal syndicate allegedly run by his brother, Lawrence, who is currently imprisoned in Sabarmati Central Jail, Ahmedabad, amid accusations of orchestrating global criminal activities.

India has officially requested Anmol's extradition, with the National Investigation Agency (NIA) announcing a reward of Rs 10 lakh for information leading to his capture. A lookout circular was issued against him in April after he purportedly claimed responsibility for the shooting incident near Salman Khan's residence. The US State Department recently refrained from commenting on Anmol's potential deportation, stating that jurisdiction lies with the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI. Spokesperson Matthew Miller noted that inquiries about such matters should be directed to those agencies. —*PTI*

The national capital recorded an AQI of 376, which falls in the 'very poor' category PHOTO: PTI

Delhi air now improves to 'very poor' category

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

After enduring a week marked by "severe" pollution levels, Delhi's air quality saw a slight uptick but still fell within the "very poor" category. The city also recorded its coldest morning of the season on Thursday, with temperatures dipping to 10.2 degrees Celsius, a full 2.1 degrees below the seasonal average, according to the India Meteorological Department.

As of 9 am, the national capital registered an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 376, as reported by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Despite the marginal improvement, the weather agency has forecast shallow fog throughout the day.

A particularly alarming trend developed on Sunday when Delhi's AQI was classified as severe, prompting the enforcement of GRAP-IV measures. The situation further deteriorated on Monday and Tuesday, with AQI levels exceeding 450, ranking them in the severe plus category. Although the air quality improved slightly by Wednesday, it remained within the severe range.

Air Quality Index classifications are as follows: 0-50 is considered "good", 51-100 "satisfactory", 101-200 "moderate", 201-300 "poor", 301-400 "very poor", and 401-500 "severe". The IMD predicts that temperatures will rise to a maximum of around 27 degrees Celsius later in the day, while humidity stood at 80 per cent at 8.30am. —*PTI*

Six get life in jail for Odisha gangrape

BHAWANIPATNA, 21 NOV

A court in Kalahandi district, Odisha, sentenced six individuals to life imprisonment for the gang rape of a woman in September 2019. The convicted are Lalindra Sabar, Labanya Chatria, Anirudha Chatria, Prakash Naik, Santa Naik, and Amit Naik. Three other accomplices, believed to have circulated a video of the attack on social media, were acquitted due to insufficient evidence.

The incident occurred as the victim was returning home from Bhawanipatna when Sabar, who was known to her, offered her a ride on his motorcycle. During the journey, he and his associates assaulted her in a forest area.

The Junagarh police acted upon a complaint filed by the victim's parents, leading to the apprehension of the perpetrators. —*PTI*

Several dead in UP, J'khand accidents

HAZARIBAG/ALIGARH, 21 NOV

A couple of bus accidents in Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand resulted in significant fatalities and injuries. In Jharkhand's Hazaribagh district, at least seven people were killed and several others injured on Thursday when a Patna-bound bus overturned while negotiating a sharp bend, approximately 50km from the district headquarters.

Hazaribag SP Arvind Kumar Singh confirmed that around 50 passengers were on board, and some may still be trapped in the wreckage. "We were asleep when the accident occurred," said passenger Motichand Prasad, whose wife, Rajkumari, lost her life.

In a separate incident in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, five people died when a bus collided with a truck on the Yamuna Expressway during the early hours of Thursday. The privately operated bus was travelling from Delhi to Azamgarh when it struck a truck that was carrying glass items. An injured passenger reported that the collision occurred around 6am. The police promptly responded to both accidents conducting rescue operations and transferring the injured to hospitals. Postmortem examinations for the deceased have been initiated, and legal proceedings are underway regarding both incidents. —*PTI*

People gather near an overturned bus after an accident, in Hazaribagh district, in Jharkhand on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

HEROIN, METH WORTH ₹86 CRORE SEIZED IN MIZORAM

AIZAWL, 21 NOV

In a significant crackdown on drug trafficking, the Assam Rifles, in collaboration with Mizoram Police, seized banned Methamphetamine tablets and heroin valued at over Rs 86 crore in two separate operations in Champhai district.

On Wednesday, a joint team conducted an operation in a village after receiving intelligence regarding suspicious movements across the Tiau River along the India-Myanmar border. While traffickers managed to escape, authorities recovered 28.52kg of Methamphetamine tablets, valued at Rs 85.56 crore. These tablets, often referred to as the 'crazy drug', are illegal in India.

In a separate operation, two Myanmar nationals—a man and a woman—were arrested after police seized 52 grams of heroin, worth Rs 39 lakh. Additionally, a motorcycle used for transporting the narcotic was also confiscated. The combined efforts underscore the ongoing battle against drug trafficking along the porous India-Myanmar border. —*PTI*

Govt to conduct survey of homeless in Ladakh

LEH/JAMMU, 21 NOV

Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday reviewed the functioning of the power and housing departments in Ladakh, and announced to conduct a survey of all the homeless people in the Union Territory to ensure no one remains homeless. Khattar said work is progressing on a 13 GW solar plant which aims to meet local energy needs besides addressing energy demands in other parts of the country.

He also said that financial assistance has been provided to all the street vendors under the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme, and all efforts will be made to ensure that no one is left out. —*PTI*

AFTER VOTING DAY

Shivaji statue collapse case: HC grants bail to consultant

MUMBAI, 21 NOV

The Bombay High Court on Thursday granted bail to consultant Chetan Patil arrested in connection with the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj''s statue at Rajkot fort in Malvan in August.

A 35-foot statue of the iconic Maratha warrior king collapsed in Sindhudurg district on 26 August, nearly nine months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled it on Navy Day.

Patil was arrested on 30 August from Kolhapur.

A single bench of Justice A S Kilor on Thursday held that no case was made out to implicate Patil in the case as he had not been appointed as the structural designer of the statue.

The bench further said Patil had only submitted a structural stability report of the pedestal of the statue and the pedestal was intact even after the collapse.

A 35-foot statue of the iconic Maratha warrior king collapsed in Sindhudurg district on 26 August PHOTO: PTI

Another accused, Jaydeep Apte, who was the sculptor and contractor, was also arrested in the case.

The court said it would hear his bail plea on 25 November.

The Sindhudurg police had registered an FIR under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for negligence and other offences last month against Apte and Patil for the statue's collapse.

Patil and Apte moved High Court seeking bail after a sessions court rejected their pleas. —*PTI*

BULLDOZER JUSTICE

Writers accuse JCB literature prize of hypocrisy

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

An open letter signed by over a hundred writers, translators, and publishers has accused the JCB Prize for Literature of hypocrisy, alleging that the British bulldozer manufacturer, which funds the award, plays a "major role in the horrifying destruction of homes" in India and Palestine. The signatories, including renowned poets and activists like K. Satchidanandan and Meena Kandasamy, argue that the use of JCB bulldozers in India is linked to a "systematic campaign" by the BJP government to demolish homes, shops, and mosques, an operation troublingly dubbed "bulldozer justice."

The letter highlights that JCB India, a subsidiary of JC Bamford Excavators Limited, has significant ties to the far-right Hindu nationalist agenda, and that its machinery also contributes to home demolitions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under a contract with the Israeli Ministry of Defence.

Many argue that the use of JCB bulldozers is linked to a systematic campaign by BJP government to demolish homes PHOTO: PTI

Despite the establishment of the JCB Prize, which claims to support marginalised and diverse writers, the signatories maintain that the company remains complicit in actions that devastate lives and livelihoods. "This prize cannot wash off the blood on JCB's hands," they write, asserting that India's emerging literary talents deserve better.

Notable signatories include Palestinian novelist Isabella Hammad and Irish novelist Ronan Bennett, underlining the global scope of the issue. Writer Zia Us Salam labelled JCB "a symbol of state-sponsored hate and intimidation," arguing that the literature prize aims to gain legitimacy while overshadowing serious human rights violations in India and beyond. —*PTI*

GUJARAT FIFTH STATE TO EXEMPT TAX FOR 'THE SABARMATI REPORT'

AHMEDABAD, 21 NOV

PHOTO: X

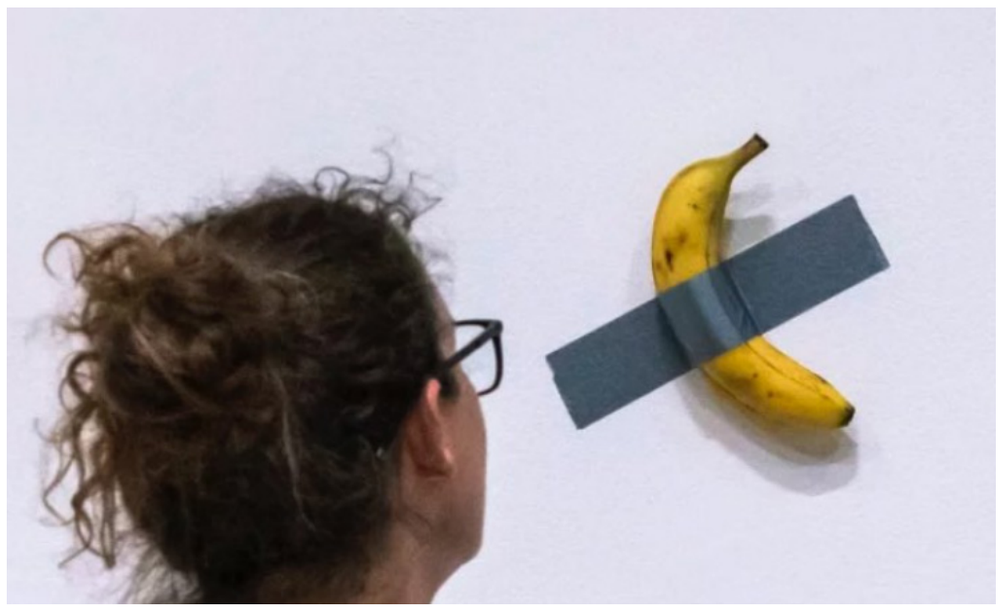
The Gujarat government, led by the BJP, has declared the Hindi film 'The Sabarmati Report', which centres on the 2002 Godhra train burning incident, as tax-free within the state. This announcement was made following a screening attended by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, who viewed the film on Wednesday night alongside producer Ekta Kapoor, veteran actor Jitendra, actress Riddhi Dogra, and Gujarat Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi.

According to an official release, the Chief Minister praised the movie and confirmed its tax-exempt status in Gujarat, making it the fifth BJP-ruled state to do so. Previously, Rajasthan, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh had similarly granted tax-free status to the Vikrant Massey-starring film, which debuted in theatres last week. The Godhra incident occurred on 27 February, 2002, resulting in the deaths of 59 people, primarily kar sevaks, when a coach of the Sabarmati Express was set ablaze near Godhra station, igniting widespread riots across the state. Notably, both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have publicly commended the film, which aims to explore the events surrounding this pivotal moment in Gujarat's history. —*PTI*

NOT RIPE BUT RICH BANANA

A piece of conceptual art consisting of a simple banana, duct-taped to a wall, sold for Rs 52 crores at an auction in New York, with the winning bid coming from a cryptocurrency entrepreneur. Bidding started at USD 8,00,000 and within minutes shot up to USD 2 million, then USD 3 million, then USD 4 million, and higher. The final hammer price announced in the room was USD 5.2 million, which didn't include the about USD 1 million in auction house fees

PHOTO: X



FINANCE GAPS KEY ISSUE AMID NEW COP29 DRAFT

After an all-nighter, a draft text on the new climate finance package for the developing world dropped on Thursday morning -- shrunk from 25 pages to 10, but the major sticking points remain.

This has led to significant frustration among developing countries, who have repeatedly said they need at least USD 1.3 trillion to tackle the escalating challenges. With less than two days left for the UN climate conference to close, negotiators face a gargantuan task to hammer out a deal.

"The revised draft text, while more streamlined, presents a spectrum of options -- some good, some bad, and some outright ugly," said Harjeet Singh, a climate activist and Global Engagement Director for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative.

He said it acknowledges the need for public funds from developed countries but dodges the key question of how much finance is needed, shifting the burden onto developing countries to raise more domestic funds.

Vaibhav Chaturvedi from Delhi-based think tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water said it is great that the structure is streamlined, but there is no high-level number from the developed world.

David Waskow, the Director of WRI's International Climate Initiative, said the text leaves a lot of work to be done.

"Time is very tight, and to get to bridging texts, even bridging texts with options, is going to take quite a lot of work, and the presidency and the ministerial pair and parties above all, are going to need to really work hard over the next 48 to 72 hours to reach a conclusion," he said.

The draft text presents two views on the goal -- one from developing countries and another from developed countries.

The view of developing countries in the text is that trillions of dollars should be provided by developed countries every year from 2025 to 2035. Of these trillions, developed countries should contribute billions in grants or grant-equivalent terms (public funding), and the private finance mobilized to meet the goal should not create debt.

Trust remains thin as rich nations met the USD 100 billion goal two years later in 2022, with around 70% of the funds provided as loans -- adding to debt burdens of countries already reeling from disasters ***PHOTO: PTI***

They also suggest setting up burden-sharing arrangements to determine how much each developed country will contribute, based on historical emissions and GDP per capita.

The second option, reflecting developed countries' perspective, presents two positions: one is that global climate finance will reach a trillion-dollar figure per year by 2035, though still unspecified, with the funds coming from all sources.

This option doesn't factor in Article 9 of the Paris Agreement, which mandates developed nations to provide financial support. This means asking some wealthier, high-emitting developing nations to contribute to climate finance.

Their second view factors in Article 9 and calls for a goal that collectively mobilises an amount greater than USD 100 billion per annum by 2035 for developing countries from a wide range of sources and instruments, including public and private.

On the question of who will receive climate finance support, the text mentions it will be exclusively for all developing countries. However, there is no agreement yet on specific amounts for least developed countries and small island states. Rob Moore, associate director at international climate policy think tank E3G, said the absence of a clear proposal or numbers means negotiators have a lot of work ahead in the next day or two.

"The road to agreement will need to see rapid and candid engagement, with numbers on the table," he said.

The new climate finance package to help developing nations cut emissions and adapt to the worsening impacts of climate change is at the heart of the talks.

The developing world argues it needs at least USD 1.3 trillion annually -- 13 times the USD 100 billion pledged in 2009 -- to meet the growing challenges.

Trust remains thin as rich nations met the USD 100 billion goal two years later in 2022, with around 70 per cent of the funds provided as loans -- adding to the debt burdens of countries already reeling from climate disasters.

Developing nations are pushing for funding to come directly from developed countries' public budgets. They reject the heavy reliance on private-sector contributions, which they say prioritise profit over accountability.

But the developed world, led by the EU and the US, wants a broader global goal that taps into public, private, domestic, and international sources.

They are also calling on wealthier nations like China and Gulf states -- classified as developing in 1992 -- to contribute, citing their changed economic status. *—PTI*

SALAR

How women's basic rights are being eroded globally

From Iraq to Afghanistan to the US, basic freedoms for women are being eroded as governments start rolling back existing laws.

Just a few months ago a ban on Afghan women speaking in public was the latest measure introduced by the Taliban, who took back control of the country in 2021. From August the ban included singing, reading aloud, reciting poetry and even laughing outside their homes.

The Taliban's ministry for the propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice, which implements one of the most radical interpretations of Islamic law, enforces these rules. They are part of a broader set of "vice and virtue" laws that severely restrict women's rights and freedoms. Women are even banned from reading the Quran out loud to other women in public.

In the past three years in Afghanistan, the Taliban has taken away many basic rights from women who live there, so that there's very little that they are allowed to do.

From 2021, the Taliban started introducing restrictions on girls receiving education, starting with a ban on coeducation and then a ban on girls attending secondary schools. This was followed by closing blind girls' schools in 2023, and making it mandatory for girls in grades four to six (ages nine to 12) to cover their faces on the way to school. Women can no longer attend universities or receive a degree certificate nationally, or follow midwifery or nursing training in the Kandahar region. Women are no longer allowed to be flight attendants, or to take a job outside the home. Women-run bakeries in the capital Kabul have now been banned. Women are mostly now unable to earn any money, or leave their homes. In April 2024, the Taliban in Helmand province told media outlets to even refrain from airing women's voices.

Meanwhile, in Iraq, on 4 August, an amendment to Iraq's 1959 personal status law which would possibly lower the age of consent for marriage to nine years old from 18 (or 15 with permission from a judge and parents) was proposed by member of parliament Ra'ad al-Maliki and supported by conservative Shia factions in the government.

The law would have the potential of having matters of family law – such as marriage – adjudicated by religious authorities. This change could not only legalise child marriage but also strip women of rights related to divorce, child custody and inheritance.

Iraq already has a high rate of underage marriage, with 7 per cent of girls married by 15 years old, and 28 per cent married before the legal age of 18.

Unregistered marriages, not legally recorded in court but conducted through religious or tribal authorities, prevent girls from accessing civil rights, and leave women and girls vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and neglect, with limited options for seeking justice.

Many women's groups have already mobilised against the law. But the amendment has passed its second reading in parliament. If introduced, it could pave the way for further modifications that deepen sectarian divides and move the country further away from a unified legal system. It would also be an especially troubling step backward in protecting children's rights and gender equality.

Meanwhile, in the US, women's access to abortion has been eroded significantly in the past few years. In late 2021, the US was officially labelled a backsliding democracy by an international thinktank.

Six months later, the landmark US Supreme Court ruling of Roe v Wade, which had safeguarded the constitutional right to abortion for nearly 50 years, was overturned. This led to a cascade of restrictive laws, with more than a quarter of US states enacting outright bans or severe restrictions on abortion.

Republican US congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene suggested, in May 2022, that women should stay celibate if they did not want to get pregnant. If only all women had that choice. In fact, in the US a sexual assault occurs every 68 seconds. One in every five American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape. From 2009-13, US Child Protective Services agencies found strong evidence indicating that 63,000 children per year were victims of sexual abuse. These developments reflect a troubling pattern. There is evidence from Donald Trump's first term that there could be further erosion of women's rights in his second presidency. During his previous term there were significant attempts to weaken healthcare access, with his foreign policy reinstating the "global gag rule" restricting access to women's reproductive healthcare worldwide via funding conditions. *—The Conversation*

Unregistered marriages conducted through religious or tribal authorities, prevent girls from accessing civil rights, and leave them vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and neglect ***PHOTO: ANI***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Concern rises as Trump skips FBI background checks on Cabinet picks

As senators prepare to consider President-elect Donald Trump's picks for his Cabinet, they may be doing so without a well-established staple of the confirmation process: an FBI background check.

The Trump transition team has so far not signed the requisite agreements with the White House or the Justice Department to allow the FBI to screen his personnel choices, both for the process of obtaining security clearances and meeting the Senate's usual standards for nominations.

That means the Senate could be asked to vote on Trump's picks without the usual rigorous background checking meant to uncover personal problems, criminal histories or other red flags that would raise questions about a nominee's suitability for the job. There already are questions about problematic issues related to a number of the people Trump wants in his administration.

"There are very real liabilities on the security side if you don't get this right," said Dan Meyer, a Washington lawyer at the Tully Rinckey law firm who specialises in background checks, security clearances and federal employment law.

At issue is a memorandum of understanding under which a president — or in this case, an incoming one — submits requests for name and background checks and the FBI commits to flagging to the White House any adverse information uncovered during the process.

But that document has not yet been signed, with the Trump transition team relying instead on internal campaign aides, allied groups and law firms on the outside to support the personnel effort. Trump for years has regarded FBI leadership with suspicion, in part because of the Russian election interference investigation that shadowed his first term and more recently because of FBI investigations into his hoarding of classified documents and his efforts to undo the results of the 2020 election that led to his indictment last year.

A Justice Department spokesperson said Wednesday that discussions were ongoing with the Trump transition team about signing the memo.

In a statement last week, the department said it was "committed to ensuring an orderly and effective transition" to the next administration.

For those appointees whose jobs involve a security clearance, a background check would be required. But once Trump takes office on January 20, 2025, he could simply order that people be given a security clearance, as he was reported to have done for son-in-law Jared Kushner during his first term.

Trump for years has regarded FBI leadership with suspicion, in part because of the Russian election interference investigation that shadowed his first term ***PHOTO: PTI***

"The president is the head of the personnel security system," Meyer said. "The director of national intelligence is his executive agent for that. The president could issue an executive order and he could change the security system in two seconds. It's all his."

Senate GOP leaders have said they would launch confirmation hearings as soon as the new Congress convenes on 3 January, and hope to begin voting on nominees as soon as inauguration day.

Lawmakers are complaining about what they see as insufficient screening of the picks they're being asked to consider. Two Democratic House members, Don Beyer of Virginia and Ted Lieu of California, introduced a bill Tuesday that would codify the FBI's role in the background check process for political appointees of the president.

Trump's choice for attorney general, former Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz, faced a Justice Department sex trafficking investigation into allegations involving underage girls that ended with no federal charges against him. There was also a House Ethics inquiry into whether Gaetz engaged in sexual misconduct and illicit drug use, accepted improper gifts and sought to obstruct government investigations of his conduct — allegations that he denies.

Asked Wednesday if she was concerned by the allegations, Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine said, "of course."

"I said from the beginning that I was shocked by the nomination given the many allegations," she added, "but that's why it's important that the Senate go through its process of making sure that we have a background check, that we have a Senate investigation which involves extensive interviews and questionnaires and then a public hearing."

Pete Hegseth, picked for the role of defence secretary, was accused of sexual assault in 2017 after a speaking appearance at a Republican women's event in Monterey, California, but was not charged after a police investigation.

His lawyer, Timothy Parlatore, described the sexual encounter as consensual and confirmed that Hegseth paid the woman a sum as part of a confidential settlement. Hegseth did so to head off a threatened lawsuit, according to Parlatore, who said his client was the victim of "blackmail" and a "successful extortion." Democrats are signalling their interest in rigorous exploration of potential problem areas.The selection of former Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard for director of national intelligence has alarmed US intelligence analysts who point to her past criticism of Ukraine, comments supportive of Russia as well as secret meetings with Syrian president Bashar Assad, a close ally of Russia and Iran.

The Senate has a responsibility to closely examine Gabbard and should not approve the confirmation just because Republicans feel a loyalty to Trump, said Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn., his party's ranking member on the House Intelligence Committee.

"The Republican senator who votes to confirm Matt Gaetz or Robert Kennedy or Tulsi Gabbard will be remembered by history as somebody who completely gave up their responsibility to Donald Trump," Himes said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation." *—PTI*

US wants Google to sell Chrome to end monopoly

WASHINGTON DC, 21 NOV

US regulators want a federal judge to break up Google to prevent the company from continuing to squash competition through its dominant search engine after a court found it had maintained an abusive monopoly over the past decade. The proposed breakup floated by the US Department of Justice calls for punishments that would include a sale of Google's industry-leading Chrome web browser and impose restrictions to prevent Android from favouring its own search engine. Although regulators stopped short of demanding Google sell Android too, they asserted the judge should make it clear the company could still be required to divest its smartphone operating system if its oversight committee continues to see evidence of misconduct.

The DoJ brought the case against Google during US president-elect Donald Trump's first four-year term. In a landmark ruling in August, Judge Amit Mehta ruled that Google operates an online search monopoly and has been considering what remedies or penalties to impose. If Mehta embraces the government's recommendations, Google would be forced to sell its 16-year-old Chrome browser within six months of the final ruling.

Besides seeking a Chrome spinoff and a corralling of the Android software, US wants the judge to ban Google from forging multibillion-dollar deals to lock in its dominant search engine as the default option on iPhone. It would also ban Google from favouring its own services, such as YouTube or Gemini.

Regulators also want Google to not enter into a contract with a publisher to license data that provides the search engine giant with exclusivity to the publisher's content. Google would be required under the proposals to license search results to competitors at nominal cost and share data it gathers from users with competitors for free.

It would be barred from collecting user data that it cannot share due to privacy. *—PTI*

China, Brazil sign dozens of trade deals

BRASILIA, 21 NOV

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva have inked dozens of trade and development deals, as the pair held talks in Brazil's capital aimed at deepening ties between the two countries. The leaders showcased their growing bilateral relationship by signing nearly 40 agreements on trade, technology and environmental protection. "This is another historic moment in the development of China-Brazil relations," said Xi, adding that China was ready to make the countries "golden partners". For his part, Lula said he was "confident" that the partnership "will exceed all expectations and pave the way for a new phase of bilateral relations". *—PTI*

4 dead in Laos alcohol poisoning incident

VIENTIANE, 21 NOV

An Australian teenager has died after drinking tainted alcohol in Vang Vieng, Laos, Australia's prime minister on said Thursday, and the US State Department confirmed an American also died in the same party town, bringing the death toll to four in the poisoning incident. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told Parliament that 19-year-old Bianca Jones had died after being evacuated from Laos for treatment in a Thai hospital. Her friend, also 19, remains hospitalised in Thailand. The two Australian women fell ill on 13 November after a night out drinking with a group. They are believed to have consumed drinks tainted with methanol, which sometimes used as the alcohol in mixed drinks at disreputable bars and can cause severe poisoning or death. *—PTI*

Rain and snow pummel Northern California

SANTA ROSA, 21 NOV

A major storm pummelled Northern California with rain and snow on Wednesday night and threatened to cause flash flooding and rockslides in the latest wave of damaging weather to wash over the West Coast. The National Weather Service extended a flood watch into Saturday for areas north of San Francisco as the strongest atmospheric river — a large plume of moisture flowing onshore — that California and the Pacific Northwest has seen this season inundated the region. The storm system unleashed winds the night before that left two people dead and hundreds of thousands without power in Washington state. Dozen schools were closed in the Seattle area on Wednesday. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Volcano in Iceland erupts for 7th time in year

GRINDAVIK, 21 NOV

A volcano on the Reykjanes Peninsula in southwestern Iceland has erupted for the seventh time since December. The eruption started with little warning at 11.14pm on Wednesday and created a fissure around 3km long. The activity is estimated to be considerably smaller than the previous eruption in August, Iceland's meteorological office that monitors seismic activity said. "In the big picture, this is a bit smaller than the last eruption, and the eruption that occurred in May," Magnus Tumi Guamundsson, a professor of geophysics who flew over the scene with the Civil Protection agency to monitor the event, told the national RUV broadcaster. While the eruption poses no threat to air travel, authorities warned of gas emissions across parts of the peninsula, including the nearby town of Grindavik. — *PTI*

Russia uses intercontinental ballistic missiles for 1st time

Putin hits Kyiv 2 days after signing revised nuclear doctrine

KYIV, 21 NOV

Ukraine says Russia launched an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) overnight targeting Dnipro city in the central-east of the country, which, if confirmed, would be the first time Moscow has used such a missile in the war.

In a statement Thursday on the Telegram messaging app, Ukraine's air force did not specify the exact type of missile, but said it was launched from Russia's Astrakhan region, which borders the Caspian Sea.

It said an intercontinental ballistic missile was fired at Dnipro city along with eight other missiles, and that the Ukrainian military shot down six of them.

Two people were wounded as a result of the attack, and an industrial facility and a rehabilitation centre for people with disabilities were damaged, according to local officials.

While the range of an ICBM would seem excessive for use against Ukraine, such missiles are designed to carry nuclear warheads.

The attack comes two days after Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a revised nuclear doctrine that formally lowers the threshold for the country's use of nuclear weapons. Ukraine on Tuesday fired several American-supplied longer-range missiles and reportedly fired UK-made Storm Shadows on Wednesday into Russia.

Firefighters work at the site of a Russian missile strike amid Russia's attack on Ukraine's Dnipro on Thursday *PHOTO: X*

The Russian Defence Ministry said in a statement Thursday that its air defence systems shot down two British-made Storm Shadow missiles, six HIMARS rockets, and 67 drones.

The announcement came in the ministry's daily roundup regarding the military actions in Ukraine. The statement didn't say when or where exactly it happened or what the missiles were targeting. This is not Moscow's first public announcement of the shooting down of Storm Shadow missiles, as Russia earlier reported downing some over the annexed Crimean Peninsula. *—PTI*

N Korea, Russia agree to expand economic ties

SEOUL, 21 NOV

North Korea and Russia reached a new agreement for expanding economic cooperation following high-level talks in Pyongyang this week, the North's state media said Thursday. This is as they continue to align in the face of their confrontations with Washington.

Russian news agency Tass on Tuesday said officials agreed to increase the number of charter flights between the countries to promote tourism.

Russian delegation led by Alexandr Kozlov, the country's Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology, arrived in North Korea on Sunday and met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. During Kozlov's visit, Russian President Vladimir Putin's gifted Pyongyang's Central Zoo with 70 animals, including lions, bears and several species of birds.

Kim has prioritised relations with Moscow as he attempts to break out of international isolation and strengthen his footing, supporting Putin's war on Ukraine. *—PTI*

AS WAR ESCALATES

US deputy ambassador Robert Wood said the US worked for weeks to avoid a veto of the resolution *PHOTO: X*

US vetoes UN Gaza truce resolution

UNITED NATIONS, 21 NOV

The United States on Wednesday vetoed a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire in the war in Gaza because it was not linked to an immediate release of hostages taken captive by Hamas militants in Israel in October 2023.

The council voted overwhelmingly in favour of the resolution — 14 of its 15 members voted "yes" including US allies Britain and France — but it was doomed by the veto.

US deputy ambassador Robert Wood said the United States worked for weeks to avoid a veto of the resolution sponsored by the council's 10 elected members, and expressed regret that compromise language was not accepted.

"We made clear throughout negotiations we could not support an unconditional cease-fire that failed to release the hostages," he said.

"Hamas would have seen it as a vindication of its cynical strategy to hope and pray the international community forgets about the fate of more than 100 hostages from more than 20 member states who have been held for 410 days." The emotional response to the veto by the Palestinian deputy UN ambassador, Majed Bamya, reflected the widespread anger and disappointment at the failure of the UN's most powerful body to demand an end to the more than 13-month war, which has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza health ministry, and left most of the territory in ruins. *—PTI*

PAKISTAN ROW

Pak court grants 5 day remand of Imran Khan in vandalism

ISLAMABAD, 21 NOV

An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan on Thursday granted a five-day physical remand of former prime minister Imran Khan, who was arrested formally by police hours after his bail in a corruption case was accepted.

Khan, 72, was arrested by Rawalpindi police in the New Town police station case on Wednesday night after securing bail in the second Toshakhana case and was produced before the Anti-Terrorism Court in Adiala Jail.

The police prosecution team sought a 15-day physical remand but the court granted the five-day physical remand and ordered to continue the investigation inside the jail.

The court also rejected the PTI lawyer Salman Safdar's plea to discharge his client from the case.

The police alleged that Khan, while imprisoned in Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, had called for a protest in Rawalpindi on 28 September *PHOTO: DAWN*

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday granted Khan bail in the second Toshakhana case related to the purchase of an expensive Bulgari jewellery set at a throwaway price, igniting hopes of his release.

However, hours later, Rawalpindi police arrested him late at night in connection with a case registered at New Town Police Station on terrorism and other charges.

The police alleged that Khan, while imprisoned in Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, had called for a protest in Rawalpindi on 28 September.

Dawn newspaper quoted a police spokesperson as saying that Khan had been detained in the case filed on 28 September and a team has been tasked to probe the charges. Dozens of cases have been registered against Khan since losing power in April 2022. *—PTI*

Trump announces US envoys to NATO, Canada

WASHINGTON DC, 21 NOV

US President-elect Donald Trump has announced his envoys for NATO and Canada, following his nominations for ambassador to Israel and Special Envoy to the Middle East. Trump said that Acting Attorney General Matthew G Whitaker will be the US Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), while former Congressman Pete Hoekstra has been nominated as Ambassador to Canada.

Hoekstra represented Michigan's 2nd District in Congress for nearly 20 years, during which he was also Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

"In my second term, Pete will help me once again put AMERICA FIRST. He did an outstanding job as United States Ambassador to the Netherlands during our first four years, and I am confident that he will continue to represent our Country well in this new role," the president-elect added.

Trump said Whitaker would ensure the US interests are advanced and defended. "Matt will strengthen relationships with our NATO Allies and stand firm in the face of threats to Peace and Stability - He will put AMERICA FIRST," he said.

Meanwhile, Google CEO Sundar Pichai reportedly dialled US president-elect Donald Trump to congratulate him for his massive win in the presidential election on Thursday. According to reports, Tesla CEO Elon Musk joined the phone call. *—PTI*

Texas offers 1,400 acres for deportation plan

HOUSTON, 21 NOV

Texas has proposed the use of a state-owned 1,400-acre ranch near the US-Mexico border to support President-elect Donald Trump's mass deportation plan. In a letter to Trump on Tuesday, Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham extended the state's cooperation with federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

She offered the property, located in Starr County, about 35 miles west of McAllen, as a site for a facility to process, detain, and deport "violent criminals".

Trump has signalled his intent to declare an immigration national emergency, a move that has raised concerns among advocates about the humanitarian and logistical implications of deporting millions. As Trump's policies take shape, the divide between states supporting or opposing his immigration agenda continues to grow sharper. *—PTI*

ONUS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Platforms face $32M for under-16 access in Aus

CANBERRA, 21 NOV

Australia's centre-left government has introduced a "landmark" bill in parliament to ban children under 16 from social media.

The legislation could see platforms such as X, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram slapped with a fine of up to USD32.5million if they fail to bar children from holding accounts.

Communications Minister Michelle Rowland said on Thursday that the proposed law "places the onus on social media platforms, not parents or children, to ensure protections are in place".

"This bill seeks to set a new normative value in society that accessing social media is not the defining feature of growing up in Australia," Rowland told Parliament."There is wide acknowledgement that something must be done in the immediate term to help prevent young teens and children from being exposed to streams of content unfiltered and infinite," she added.

The bill has wide political support. After it becomes law, the platforms would have one year to work out how to implement the age restriction.

"For too many young Australians, social media can be harmful. Almost two-thirds of 14- to 17-years-old Australians have viewed extremely harmful content online including drug abuse, suicide or self-harm as well as violent material. One quarter have been exposed to content promoting unsafe eating habits," Rowland said.

Government research found that "95 per cent of Australian care-givers find online safety to be one of their toughest parenting challenges," she said.

Child welfare and internet experts have raised concerns about the ban, including isolating 14- and 15-year-olds from their already established online social networks.

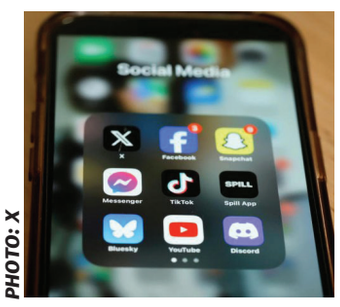


PHOTO: X

Rowland said there would not be age restrictions placed on messaging services, online games or platforms that substantially support the health and education of users. *—PTI*

SL Prez pledges to restore law and order

COLOMBO, 21 NOV

PHOTO: PTI

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, in his inaugural address to the newly convened parliament, on Thursday pledged to fulfil his pre-election promises by ensuring the supremacy of law and addressing past wrongdoings.

Staying true to his National People's Power (NPP) party's commitment to austerity, Dissanayake made a modest ceremonial entry to parliament, foregoing the usual pomp of motorcycle outriders, motorcades, and military gun salutes.

"Our duty since being elected was to win the confidence of all parties by ensuring continuity," Dissanayake said.

He expressed optimism about securing the next staff-level agreement with the IMF for the next tranche of the USD 2.9 billion facility, expected by 23 November. *—PTI*

US debacle rattles Adani as group loses ₹2.45L cr in mkt

Adani Enterprises stocks plunged by 22.9%, Ports dived 20% too

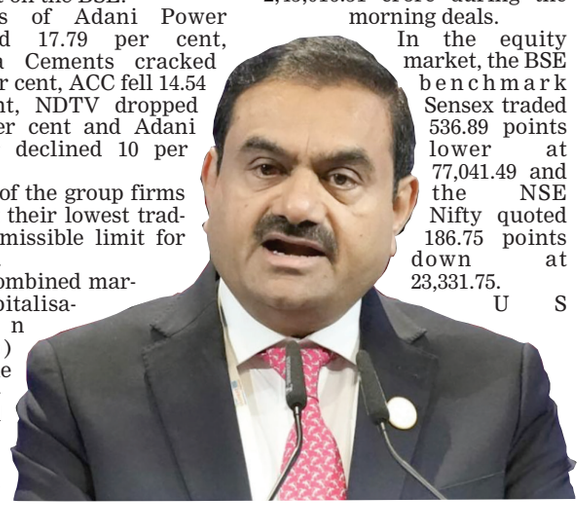
NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

Adani group stocks faced heavy drubbing during the morning trade on Thursday, with the combined market valuation of all the listed firms getting eroded by Rs 2.45 lakh crore, as billionaire Gautam Adani was charged by US prosecutors over his role in an alleged years-long scheme to pay USD 250 million bribe to Indian officials in exchange for favourable terms for solar power contracts.

The stock of the group's flagship firm Adani Enterprises plunged 22.99 per cent, Adani Ports dived 20 per cent, Adani Energy Solutions tanked 20 per cent, Adani Green Energy plummeted 19.53 per cent and Adani Total Gas tumbled 18.14 per cent on the BSE.

Shares of Adani Power slumped 17.79 per cent, Ambuja Cements cracked 17.59 per cent, ACC fell 14.54 per cent, NDTV dropped 14.37 per cent and Adani Wilmar declined 10 per cent.

Some of the group firms also hit their lowest trading permissible limit for the day.



The combined market capitalisation (mcap) of all the 10 listed group firms eroded by Rs 2,45,016.51 crore during the morning deals.

In the equity market, the BSE benchmark Sensex traded 536.89 points lower at 77,041.49 and the NSE Nifty quoted 186.75 points down at 23,331.75.

US prosecutors charged Adani, 62, his nephew Sagar and other defendants for paying over USD 250 million in bribes between 2020 and 2024 to Indian government officials to win solar energy contracts on terms that could potentially bring in more than USD 2 billion in profit. This, they alleged, was concealed from the US banks and investors from whom the Adani group raised billions of dollars for the project.

US law allows pursuing foreign corruption allegations if they involve certain links to American investors or markets.

The Adani group did not immediately respond to requests for comments.

—PTI

LIC loses ₹12,000 cr in 7 Adani stocks

India's largest institutional investor, the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), saw its holdings in seven Adani Group companies plummet by Rs 11,728 crore in a single trading session. LIC's most significant losses were in Adani Ports (Rs. 5,009 crore) and Adani Enterprises (Rs. 3,012 crore), with further declines in other companies such as Ambuja Cements and Adani Total Gas

—Salar News with Agencies

Healthcare, IT, realty and tech were the gainers **PHOTO: PTI**

Investors poorer by ₹5.27L cr as mkt slumps

MUMBAI, 21 NOV

Investors' wealth plummeted Rs 5.27 lakh crore on Thursday in line with markets fall following a sharp decline in Adani group stocks.

The BSE benchmark Sensex plunged 422.59 points or 0.54 per cent to settle at 77,155.79. During the day, it lost 775.65 points or 0.99 per cent to 76,802.73.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 5,27,767.57 crore to Rs 4,25,38,908.01 crore (USD 5.04 trillion).

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Adani Ports tumbled 13.53 per cent

All other Adani group stocks, including Adani Enterprises, Adani Energy Solutions, Adani Ports and Adani Green Energy, also fell sharply.

NTPC, State Bank of India, ITC, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance and Bajaj Finserv were also among the major laggards.

In contrast, Power Grid, UltraTech Cement, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,411.73 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.67 per cent and the midcap index dipped 0.37 per cent. Among sectoral indices, services slumped 4.14 per cent, utilities (3.16 per cent), commodities (1.55 per cent), oil & gas (1.45 per cent), power (1.34 per cent) and auto (0.91 per cent).

Healthcare, IT, realty and teck were the gainers.

As many as 2,736 stocks declined while 1,237 advanced and 92 remained unchanged on the BSE. *—PTI*

Adani Green scraps $600M bond sale

Adani Green Energy Ltd, the renewable energy arm of billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate, on Thursday scrapped a USD 600 million bond issue after its promoter was charged in an alleged bribery case in the US.

Hours before the US prosecutors charged Gautam Adani and associates with participating in a scheme to pay over USD 250M bribe to Indian officials in exchange for favourable terms for solar power contracts, the firm sold a 20-year green bond in the US-investment-grade market.

The issue was over-subscribed three times. But following the allegations, the issue was scrapped.

"The United States Department of Justice and the United States Securities and Exchange Commission have issued a criminal indictment and brought a civil complaint, respectively, in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, against our Board members, Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani.

"The United States Department of Justice has also included our Board member, Vneet Jaain, in such criminal indictment. In light of these developments, our subsidiaries have presently decided not to proceed with the proposed USD denominated bond offerings," Adani Green Energy said in a stock exchange filing.

The firm had tried to sell a similar offering a month ago but postponed the deal after some investors pushed back on pricing. *—PTI*

Adani's governance under Moody's lens

Credit ratings provider Moody's Ratings on Thursday said it would look at Adani group's governance practices when assessing the ports-to-energy conglomerate's ability to access capital in the aftermath of the indictment of group head Gautam Adani on bribery charges. "The indictment of Adani Group's chairman and other senior officials on bribery charges is credit negative for the group's companies," Moody's Ratings said in a statement. "Our main focus when assessing Adani Group is on the ability of the group's companies to access capital to meet their liquidity requirements and on its governance practices," Moody's said in the statement. *—PTI*

Gold jumps ₹1,400 to ₹79,300 per 10g; silver remains flat

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

Gold prices jumped Rs 1,400 to Rs 79,300 per 10g in the national capital on Thursday due to fresh buying by jewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 77,900 per 10g in the previous session. However, silver traded flat at Rs 93,000 per kg on Thursday. Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity zoomed Rs 1,400 to Rs 78,900 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 77,500 per 10g on Wednesday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for December delivery bounced Rs 568.

Domestic airlines to own 1,400 planes in 5 years

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

HHighlighting the growth potential of the country's aviation space, Civil Aviation Secretary Vumlunmang Vualnam on Thursday said the number of planes with domestic airlines will increase to 1,400 in the next five years. Currently, the fleet is around 800 aircraft and leading carriers IndiGo and Air India have placed significant plane orders. At a function in the national capital, the secretary also mentioned about the opportunities for women in the aviation sector, including in the drone segment. In the last 10 years, the number of airports has more than doubled from 74 to 157, Vualnam said, adding that the number of passengers has also doubled to around 22 crore from 11 crore. *—PTI*

Belrise gears up for ₹2,150 crore IPO bid

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

AAutomotive component maker Belrise Industries has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 2,150 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). It will be a fresh issue of equity shares with no offer for sale component, said the draft red herring prospectus. The company may consider raising up to Rs 430 crore through a pre-IPO placement. If this is carried out, the issue size will be reduced. The draft papers filed on Tuesday said the company intended to utilise proceeds worth Rs 1,618 crore for payment of debt. It has a borrowing of

SEBI AMENDS RULES

Investors to now have pro-rata rights in investments

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

Markets regulator Sebi has amended Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) rules directing them to grant investors' rights in investment and distribution of proceeds in proportion to their commitments in a scheme.

In simple words, risks as well as rewards from investments made by an AIF scheme need to be shared in proportion to investors' contributions to the scheme.

This is aimed at clarifying the regulatory intent of AIFs' being pooled investment vehicles and ensuring fair and equal treatment of investors of an AIF.

Also, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said that differential rights can be offered to select investors of a scheme of an

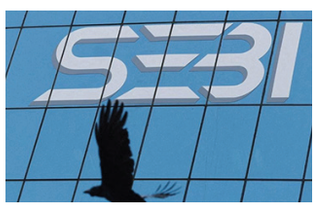


PHOTO: PTI

AIF without affecting the interest of other investors of the scheme.

The markets regulator has provided an exemption to Large Value Funds from ensuring pari-passu rights among its investors. This is subject to a waiver provided by each investor to this effect.

AIF is a privately pooled investment vehicle, which collects funds from investors, for investing under a defined investment policy for the benefit of its investors. *—PTI*

US-China trade war will not impact India: Sachs

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

India will be relatively insulated from the global economic shocks expected from a potential trade war between the US and China in 2025, said a report by Goldman Sachs.

Despite the ongoing global uncertainties, India's long-term structural growth prospects remained robust, it said.

"In 2025, we believe India will likely be a relatively insulated economy from global shocks emanating out of a potential trade war between US and China," the report said, even though it anticipated a cyclical growth slowdown, with the GDP growth forecast slowing down to 6.3 per cent year-on-year in 2025.

This slowdown is attributed to continued fiscal consolidation and tighter credit growth because of the macro-prudential measures taken by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

According to the report, the RBI's monetary policy is expected to remain cautious in 2025. It predicted that the central bank will begin easing

This slowdown is attributed to continued fiscal consolidation and tighter credit growth **PHOTO: X**

- India will be relatively insulated from the global economic shocks expected from a potential trade war between the US and China in 2025, said a report by Goldman Sachs.

interest rates from the first quarter of 2025, with a cumulative reduction of 50 basis points by mid-year.

Despite calls for more accommodative monetary conditions to support growth, the RBI is likely to proceed carefully, given the strong US dollar scenario and global trade uncertainties. Retail loan growth may remain subdued even with lower interest rates because of the ongoing macro-prudential tightening, the report said.

Although inflation is projected to align with the RBI's target next year, the rate-cut cycle is expected to be limited. The RBI is likely to aim for a balanced approach, keeping monetary policy close to the nominal neutral rate, estimated at 6 per cent. *—ANI*

Despite decline, FPIs hold major stake in NSE

MUMBAI, 21 NOV

The Foreign Portfolio Investors' (FPIs) ownership in companies listed on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) has been steadily declining over the past three years, but still they are the major shareholder.

According to an NSE report, by the end of the previous quarter, FPIs holding stood at 36.3 per cent in the NSE-listed floating stocks, despite the seventh consecutive quarterly decline.

From a high of 39.9 per cent in December 2021, FPIs holding stands at 36.3 per cent as on September 30 the lowest level of the last three years.

Despite FPIs reducing their ownership over the past three years, the Indian indices continued with the upward movement. The NSE data also suggests that FPIs ownership in floating stock now is 9.6 percentage points below the peak recorded in March 2014.

The report points out that the decline in FPI ownership began well before the October 2024 market sell-off, indicating a sustained trend. *—ANI*

'$400B threatened by climate hazards'

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

Transport assets worth approximately USD 575 billion in South Asia, including USD 400 billion in India, are exposed to climate hazards and rapid deployment of resilience measures needed to prevent risk to the sector which contributes significantly to the region's GDP, according to a report.

The South Asian region faces cascading economic losses due to climate risks, with disruptions in transport having cascading effects on

PHOTO: PTI

key sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, and services among others, as per the report jointly published by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

With the frequency and severity of climate events in South Asia escalating sharply in recent years, the cost of inaction in South Asia is staggering and without strategic interventions, climate risks could derail decades of development progress, the report titled 'Transport Infrastructure Reimagined: Forging Resilient Connections ' An Integrated Framework to Unlocking Resilience Dividends for South Asia' said. *—PTI*

RUPEE FALLS 8P TO HIT ALL-TIME LOW OF 84.50 AGAINST US DOLLAR

MUMBAI, 21 NOV

The rupee depreciated 8 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.50 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, dragged down by massive sell-off in domestic equity markets and surging crude oil prices amid a volatile geopolitical situation.

According to forex traders, the American currency strengthened due to safe-haven appeal amid escalating tension between Russia and Ukraine, while the continuous outflow of foreign funds also put pressure on the domestic

PHOTO: PTI

unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.41 and touched the lowest-ever level of 84.51 against the greenback during intraday. The unit ended the session at 84.50 (provisional) against the dollar, surpassing its previous all-time low closing level of 84.46 recorded on November 14.

On Tuesday, the rupee settled flat at 84.42 against the US dollar. *—PTI*

10,000 apply for Zomato's 'no salary' chief of staff post

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

Notwithstanding raging debate around it, Zomato CEO Deepinder Goyal on Thursday claimed that the firm has received an overwhelming 10,000 applications for the role of the "chief of staff", a position which will entail no salary in the first year, and instead the selected candidate will have to shell out Rs 20 lakh for charity.

In an unusual job vacancy posting for his Chief of Staff, Goyal on Wednesday asked prospective candidates to pay Rs 20 lakh for the first year, which in turn will be donated to non-profit Feeding India with the company offering to contribute Rs 50 lakh to a charity of the candidate's choice. In a post on social media platform X, Goyal said he is looking for a

PHOTO: PTI

"Chief of Staff" for himself with the job description reading "anything and everything to build the future of Zomato (including Blinkit, District, Hyperpure and Feeding India).

He claimed that the role would offer "10x more learnings than a 2-year degree from a top management school, working with me and some of the smartest folks in consumer tech". *—Salar News with Agencies*

BY 2027

AI data centres set to face power crunch: Gartner

NEW DELHI, 21 NOV

The rapid expansion of artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI (GenAI) technologies is set to strain global power supplies – 40 per cent of AI data centres may face operational challenges by 2027 because of electricity shortages, says a report by Gartner Inc.

The energy demand for data centres is projected to grow by 160 per cent over the next two years, pushing electricity consumption to unprecedented levels. Power usage in AI data centres is expected to rise from 261 terawatt-hours (TWh) in 2024 to 500 TWh by 2027, more than double the 2023 levels.

This surge is driven by the

The impending power shortages are expected to lead to significant cost increases for data centre operations **PHOTO: X**

increasing need for larger data centres to handle the vast computing power required for training and deploying large language models that underpin GenAI applications.

However, utility providers are struggling to expand their capacity quickly enough to meet this demand, creating a potential energy shortfall that could disrupt data centre operations by 2026.

Bob Johnson, VP Analyst at Gartner, said, "New larger data centres are being planned to handle the huge amounts of data needed to train and implement the rapidly expanding large language models that underpin GenAI applications.

"However, short-term power shortages are likely to continue for years as new power transmission, distribution, and generation capacity could take years to come online and won't alleviate current problems." The impending power shortages are expected to lead to significant cost increases for data centre operations.

As electricity prices rise, organisations relying on AI technologies will face higher operating costs. *—ANI*

It's going to get more attritional: says Cummins

PERTH, 21 NOV

Australian captain Pat Cummins expects the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against arch-foes India to be more "attritional" as the two heavyweights of world cricket spar over five Test matches instead of the traditional four games. And given the enormity of the series, Cummins believes players would not have the time to be distracted by the IPL auction that would take place in Jeddah on Sunday, the third day of the match.

"The Border-Gavaskar Trophy has always been very tight every series, five Test-match series gets attritional, it's a big one really," Cummins said at the pre-match press conference here on Thursday. Australia will be without their assistant coach Daniel Vettori, who was granted permission to leave the Perth Test and be at the two-day auction with his IPL franchise SunRisers Hyderabad.—*PTI*

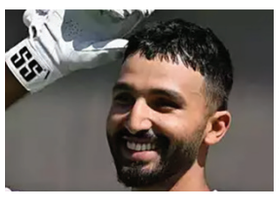


PHOTO: PTI

Embrace the fight in Australia: Agarwal to Padikkal

MUMBAI, 21 NOV

Young India batter Devdutt Padikkal will need to embrace the challenges that will come his way if he gets an opportunity in the first Test against Australia starting on Friday, feels his senior Karnataka teammate Mayank Agarwal. Padikkal, who was initially not a part of India's jumbo 18-member squad for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, was asked to stay back after A team's unofficial Tests Down Under following a blow to Shubman Gill's left hand ahead of the series opener. If Gill remains sidelined, Padikkal is in line to take the field for the second time in the format, having made his debut against England in March.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Leicester Abdul is out for season after injury

LEICESTER, 21 NOV

Leicester City winger Abdul Fatawu will miss the rest of the season because of an ACL injury, manager Steve Cooper said on Thursday. The 20-year-old Fatawu was injured while playing for Ghana in an Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Angola on Friday. He recently broke into the team at Leicester, which was promoted back to the English Premier League this season and is among the favorites for relegation. "To happen at a young age is, first and foremost, a blow for him and for us as well," Cooper said.—*PTI*

Jhulan Goswami stand named at Eden Gardens

KOLKATA, 21 NOV

Legendary Jhulan Goswami will have a stand named in her honour in the 'B' Block of the iconic Eden Gardens here, following a proposal by the Cricket Association of Bengal.A proposal to rename the 'B' Block in honour of the former India pacer has been placed before the apex body of CAB and if all goes well, it will be unveiled during the India-England T20I on January 22 next year."I never imagined something like this would come to fruition. I would love to watch a match from there," said Goswami."For any cricketer, the ultimate dream is to represent her district, state, or country, but receiving an honour like this is truly monumental."A dedicated stand is a huge, significant honour. —*PTI*

Under pressure, India meets edgy Australia

This will perhaps be the series that will be decided by bowlers

PERTH, 21 NOV

The nostalgia of Brisbane 2021 refuses to fade but India, still reeling from a bitter home debacle, will be under tremendous pressure when they face an equally circumspect Australia in a battle of two out-of-form batting units in the opening Test of the marquee Border-Gavaskar Trophy, starting here on Friday.

In 2018-19 and 2020-21, India proved that lightning can strike twice with back-to-back series wins but how New Zealand came, saw and decimated them on home turf recently has certainly hit the psyche of an otherwise world-class unit. How the five-match rubber against Pat Cummins and his men unfolds could well decide their future. A record third World Test Championship final entry that looked imminent before the start of the New Zealand series now seems like a distant dream. A 4-0 scoreline has become an absolute necessity for India to avoid relying on other teams. It also tends to play its best cricket when Doubting Thomases enjoy a condescending chuckle at their expense. In this backdrop, Australia, ready to avenge the humiliation suffered in the last five years, faces a team that enters the cage without its regular skipper (Rohit Sharma on paternity break), its best exponent of reverse swing (Mohammed Shami, still not 100 percent fit) and a future skipper (Shubman Gill, thumb fracture).

This will perhaps be the series that will be decided by bowlers more than ever with Jasprit Bumrah, leading in the opening game, entrusted with the duty of setting the tone against a line-up that has been far from its best even at home in recent times. —*PTI*

Pat Cummins and Jasprit Bumrah with Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2024-25 PHOTO: PTI

Ponting Warns of Potential Disruption

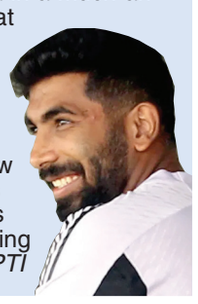
Captain Rohit Sharma linking up with the Indian team in the second Test at Adelaide could be a "potential disruption" for the visitors, reckoned the legendary Ricky Ponting, who Thursday stood by his prediction of a 3-1 series victory for Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

A GLANCE AT INDIA'S PREVIOUS TOURS TO AUSTRALIA

- 1. 1947-48: Winner: Australia: 4-0 (5)
- 2. 1967-68: Winner: Australia: 4-0 (5)
- 3. 1977-78: Winner: Australia: 3-2 (5)
- 4. 1980-81: Draw: 1-1 (3)
- 5. 1985-86: Draw: 0-0 (3)
- 6. 1991-92: Winner: Australia: 4-0 (5)
- 7. 1999-2000: Winner Australia: 3-0 (3)
- 8. 2003-04: Draw: 1-1 (4)
- 9. 2007-08: Winner: Australia: 2-1 (4)
- 10. 2011-12: Winner: Australia: 4-0 (4)
- 11. 2014-15: Winner: Australia: 2-0 (4)
- 12. 2018-19: Winner: India: 2-1 (4)
- 13. 2020-21: Winner: India: 2-1 (4)
- 14. 2022/23 : Winner: India: 2-1 (4)

Don't look at captaincy as a post but responsibility: Bumrah

Jasprit Bumrah has always loved responsibility and taking on tough jobs which is why he is relishing the prospect of leading India against fierce rivals Australia in a much-anticipated Test series opener in their backyard. This is the second time that Bumrah will captain the team in the absence of Rohit Sharma after the Edgbaston Test against England in 2022, and the 30-year-old would like to skin the cat in his way. "I don't look at captaincy as a post but I have always loved responsibility," Bumrah said at a press conference ahead of the first Test. "I wanted to do the tough job since I was a child. You want to do things and get thrown in tough scenarios, this adds a new challenge for me," India's pace spearhead said, summing up his feelings about leadership. He knows it is for only one Test match and as much as he tried to portray that he wants to be in the present, there was no denying that he would want a leadership role in the future. —*PTI*



SCHEDULE

WHERE TO WATCH: STAR SPORTS, HOTSTAR

- 1st Test: 7.50am, 22-26 NOV, PERTH
- 2nd Test: 9.30am, 6-10 DEC, ADELAIDE
- 3rd Test: 5.50am, 14-18 DEC, BRISBANE
- 4th Test: 5am, 26-30 DEC, MELBOURNE
- 5th Test: 5am, 3-7 JAN, SYDNEY

CHINA MASTERS

Sindhu exits in 2nd round after hard-fought defeat

SHENZHEN, 21 NOV

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu's campaign at the China Masters Super 750 badminton tournament came to an end in the second round after she lost to Singapore's Yeo Jia Min in a hard-fought three-game women's singles contest here on Thursday.

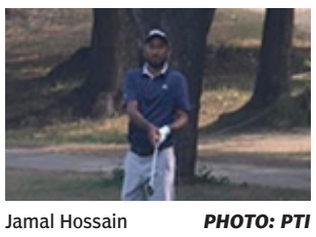
World No.19 Sindhu, who dispatched the higher-ranked Busanan Ongbamrungphan 21-17 21-19 in the opening round, fought valiantly before going down 16-21 21-17 21-23 to Min in a match that lasted one hour and nine minutes.

It was curtains for the other two surviving Indian women's singles players as well with both Anupama Upadhyaya and Malvika Bansod crashing out in the second round.

While Anupama lost 7-21 14-21 against Japan's Natsuki Nidaira, Malvika was thrashed 9-21 9-21 by eight-seeded Supanida Katethong of Thailand.

The women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand was no match for the second-seeded Chinese pair of Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning.The world number 18 India duo, which is currently at eighth spot in the BWF World Tour rankings, lost 16-11 11-21 against their Chinese opponents in a second-round match lasting just 43 minutes.

Indian singles challenge now rests on the shoulders of Lakshya Sen who will be up against Denmark's Rasmus Gemke in a men's second round match later in the day. Also in action will be defending champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who returned to action after a break following the Paris Olympics. —*PTI*



Jamal Hossain PHOTO: PTI

Jamal Hossain takes the lead under 65 on Day 2

DIGBOI, 21 NOV

Jamal Hossain of Bangladesh carded an impressive 7-under 65 for a total of 11-under 133 to take the lead after Round 2 of the IndianOil SERVO Masters here on Thursday.

Shivendra Singh Sisodia from Gurugram shot a 66 to end the day in second place at nine-under 135.Mani Ram of Karnal and Milind Soni of Hyderabad were placed tied third at 8-under 136.

Overnight leader Amardeep Malik, former champion Honey Baisoya, Olympian Udayan Mane, C Muniyappa, Vikrant Chopra, and Divyansh Dubey were all tied in fifth place at 6-under 138.Deven Bhumij was the only local golfer to cut, placed tied 27th at 1-under 143.

The cut came down at 3-over 147 as 53 professionals cut. The 39-year-old Hossain (68-65), a four-time winner on the PGTI, started the day a shot off the lead in tied second. —*PTI*

BILLIE JEAN KING CUP

Paolini leads Italy to 5th title

PARIS, 21 NOV

Italy won the Billie Jean King Cup for the fifth time as Jasmine Paolini beat Rebecca Sramkova to secure a dominant 2-0 win over Slovakia on Wednesday. World number four Paolini triumphed 6-2, 6-1 in the second singles rubber to follow Lucia Bronzetti's 6-2, 6-4 victory against Viktoria Hruncakova. Italy was runners-up to Canada in last year's final but went one better in Malaga to become world champions for the first time since 2013.

The victory capped a stunning year for Paolini who finished as runner-up at Roland Garros and Wimbledon.

"Unbelievable year, unbelievable, to finish like this with the Billie Jean King cup, it's amazing, I don't have words to describe it," said Paolini.

"I'm trying just to enjoy it, it's important to understand where you are, I feel lucky to be in this position, I feel fortunate to be part of this team...

"I'm thrilled that we could bring the trophy home again this year."

Slovakia, who won the competition in 2002, had never lost a BJK Cup tie in Spain.

The underdogs defeated the USA, Australia, and Great Britain on a stunning run to this year's final, but Bronzetti breezed past Hruncakova in under 90 minutes.

The in-form Sramkova, ranked 43rd, survived two break points to hold for 2-2 in the first set but the superior Paolini broke for a 4-2 lead, which she consolidated.

The Slovakian double-faulted to hand Paolini two set points, and the Italian took the first of them when Sramkova slapped a shot into the net.

Paolini broke in the second game of the second set and it looked like she might power to victory without a fight, but Sramkova immediately hit back to get back on serve.

Sramkova defeated Danielle Collins, Ajla Tomljanovic, and Katie Boulter on Slovakia's charge to the final but Paolini was a bridge too far.

The 28-year-old Italian restored her advantage with a fizzing forehand to move 3-1 ahead and then consolidated.

Having spent most of her career outside the top 50, 2024 has been a huge leap forward for Paolini.

She broke again when Sramkova went long and served it out to seal an emphatic victory in one hour and five minutes. —*PTI*

Italy's Jasmine Paolini, Lucia Bronzetti, Camila Giorgi, Martina Trevisan, Elisabetta Cocciaretto and captain Tathiana Garbin celebrate with the trophy after winning the Billie Jean King Cup PHOTO: X/@BJKCUP

KOKKINAKIS GETS PAST SHELTON FOR AUSTRALIA

MALAGA, 21 NOV

Thanasi Kokkinakis emerged from a tight-as-can-be tie-breaker by saving four match points and eventually converting his seventh to get past Ben Shelton 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (14) and give Australia a 1-0 lead over the United States in the Davis Cup quarterfinals on Thursday.

On an indoor hard court at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martina Carpena in southern Spain, the 77th-ranked Kokkinakis withstood 21 aces from Shelton, a big-serving left-hander who is ranked 21st and reached the U.S. Open semifinals in 2023. The second singles were scheduled to be U.S. Open runner-up Taylor Fritz of the U.S. against No. 9 Alex de Minaur of Australia. If Fritz were to win that one, the matchup would be decided by doubles, with Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram of the U.S. taking on Matthew Ebden and Jordan Thompson of Australia. —*PTI*

I-League clubs urge AIFF to delay league

KOLKATA, 21 NOV

The I-League Clubs Association on Thursday urged the All India Football Federation to delay the league until the ongoing broadcast issue is resolved, as a fresh tussle emerged just a day before the scheduled kickoff of its 18th season.

The opening day's fixtures on Friday are slated to be between Sreenidi Deccan FC and Gokulam Kerala FC in Hyderabad at 4 pm, and Inter Kashi taking on debutants Sporting Club Bengaluru at Kalyani near Kolkata at 7 pm.However, the 12 participating clubs have expressed frustration over AIFF's failure to finalize a broadcast deal with Sony Network.

PHOTO: PTI

In a strongly worded letter to the AIFF president, the clubs warned they would "not commence the league unless confirmation of the broadcast was received by 8 pm on Thursday.""I-league clubs request you to send us confirmation of Sony Network as the official broadcaster of the I-League 24-25 by 8 pm tonight, failing which I-league clubs will not commence the league as scheduled to commence tomorrow," they wrote.

"To add to our frustrations, hefty fines averaging Rs 10 lakh per club on account of failure in Club Licensing have been communicated to clubs last night," the letter stated."

Many clubs have been fined up to 25 lakhs despite repeated assurances by the president that no infrastructure fines will be applied to the clubs. —*PTI*

FOUR FORMULA 1 DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Verstappen on brink of elite club of drivers

LONDON, 21 NOV

Max Verstappen will become just the sixth man in Formula One history to win four world championship titles if he can see off his friend and rival Lando Norris at the Las Vegas Grand Prix this weekend. Red Bull's three-time champion, who ended a 10-race winless drought by storming to victory from 17th on the grid in Brazil three weeks ago, needs only to stay ahead of Norris, or keep the McLaren driver out of the top eight finishers, to retain his crown.

The Dutchman, on 393, holds a 62-point lead over Norris, on 331, with 60 more points to be won after the Vegas race.

He knows he does not need to gamble as he seeks to join multiple champions Juan Manuel Fangio (five titles), Alain Prost (four), Michael Schumacher (seven), Sebastian Vettel (four) and Lewis Hamilton (seven).

After a blistering start to the season which saw him win seven of the first 10 races, Verstappen suffered a dip that saw his aggressive racing style called into question.

A return to form in Brazil and the experience of having won on the garish streets of Sin City in the inaugural Las Vegas event last year makes Verstappen a clear favorite to take his fourth title in consecutive years.

"Brazil was incredible for us," said Verstappen. "It was a really special moment for myself and the team and it was great to see us back to the form we were in before.

"The team did an amazing job and we hope to continue that into the next races. It's the final push for everyone.

"We performed well here last year. It's a fast circuit with long straights and many overtaking opportunities."

McLaren, however, seeking a first constructors' title since 1998, will aim to postpone the seemingly inevitable as the F1 circus enters a triple-header finale to the season with races to follow in Qatar and Abu Dhabi on December 1 and 8.

McLaren leads the teams' title race with 593 ahead of Ferrari on 557 and Red Bull on 544. —*PTI*

Costa Rican team threatens FIFA with legal action

LONDON, 21 NOV

The winningest team in Costa Rica is asking FIFA for a spot in next summer's Club World Cup and says it is willing to take legal action if denied.

Alajuelense, which has won 30 league titles, wants FIFA to enforce the rule that forbids clubs from the same ownership to participate in the tournament.

"The claim is based on the principles of eligibility set in the rules of the tournament," the club said in a press release.

Team spokesman Marco Vazquez noted that Mexican clubs Leon and Pachuca belong to the same owner, Jesus Martinez, of Grupo Pachuca.

"Those are the rules that FIFA established — there cannot be multi-ownership," Vazquez said Wednesday. "There are two Mexican clubs from the same owner and the rulebook is clear. What we are asking is to review what FIFA itself established."

The FIFA-run competition has been expanded from seven teams to 32 and will be staged in the United States from June to July next year. FIFPRO, however, said a players' strike can't be ruled out. —*AP*